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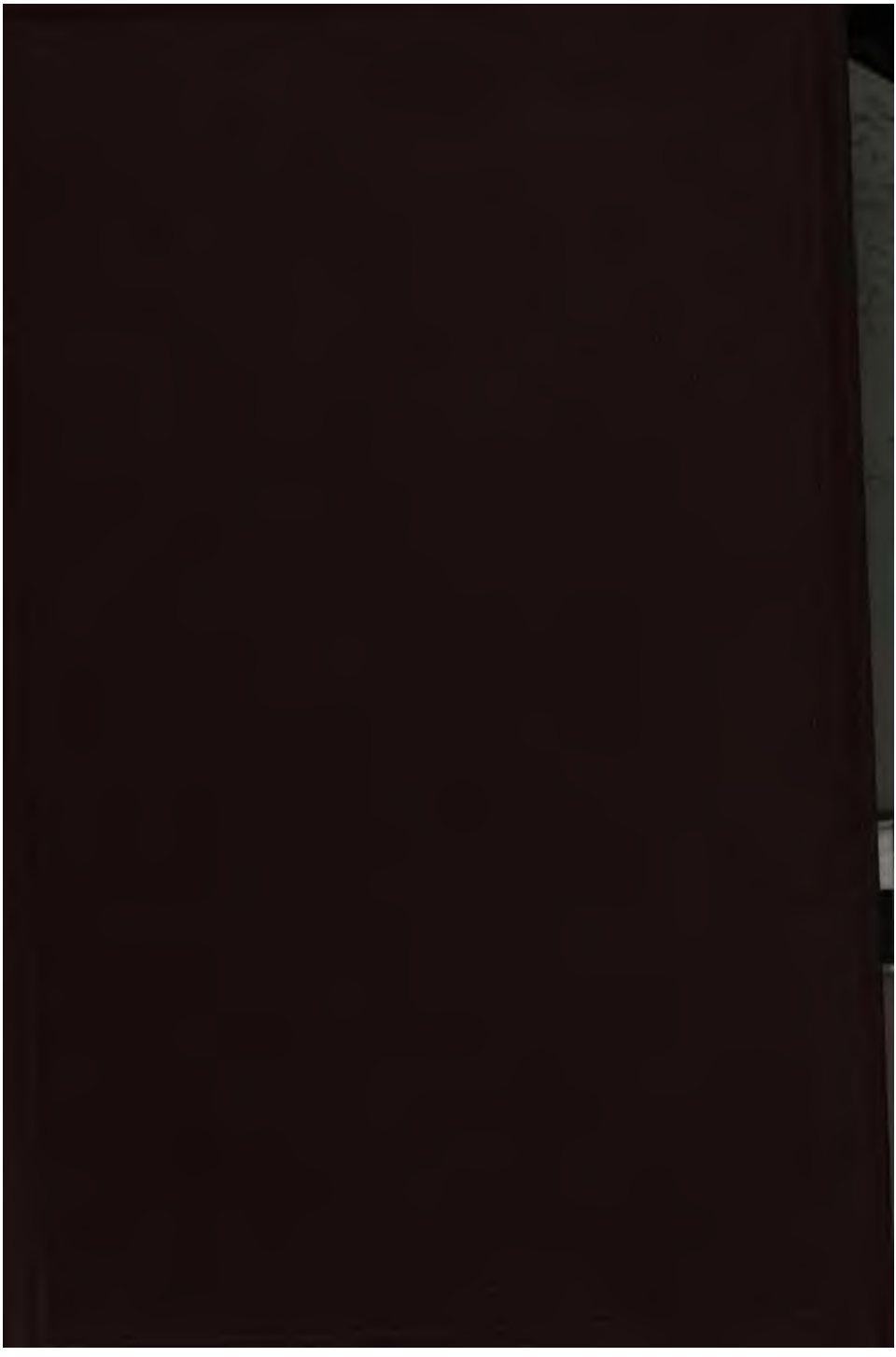

MARIAN'S TRUST.

VOL. II.

MARIAN'S TRUST.

BY

THE AUTHOR OF

"URSULA'S LOVE STORY,"
"BEAUTIFUL EDITH,"

&c. &c.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

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MARIAN'S TRUST.

CHAPTER I.

TENDER SCENES.

As toughest trees in storms are bred,
And grow in spite of winds, and spread,
The more the tempest tears and shakes
My love, the deeper root it takes.

LORD LANSDOWNE.

ON the morrow, when Lizzie got up, she felt as if something had happened, and, not exactly *changed*, but made a difference in her. She had seen the world. She knew a great deal more than the young girl had known who, a few months, or even weeks before, had been gazing on life out of the windows of the back drawing-room,

and acquainting herself with the habits of their neighbour's fowls. The knowledge of good and evil had come to her, and she had learnt a wonderful lesson—not to hope always, but to pause and consider. Kind fortune had given true gold into her hand, and she was considering, not whether it was true metal, but whether it would pass current as such in the painted and gilded, scented, sweetened, and, externally, most lovely life that she had gazed on in a gracious hour.

Lady Florence had received Lizzie like an old friend. All her married life she had been familiar with the name of her family, and she had frequently met Herbert—even as far back as before he took his degree—at Lord Reinecourt's. Her brother-in-law was dead now. Her nephew did not, perhaps, know quite as much of Portspadron as her husband and his father had done. But he knew all about Herbert—being only a few

years older; and he knew Teresa Mawley. As to Herbert's family, it had got to be generally known that, on the General's death, their means had become considerably less. But then they had been very rich before. And riches and penury are expressions which can only be understood by comparison. Mr. Harcourt did not in any way give anyone an idea of being in needy circumstances,; and as to his mother, it was believed that she was alive, but no one ever heard anything about her. Her son always described her as "quite a recluse."

Into this old world Lizzie had got back.

"I might belong to it if I liked," she thought in her heart—"I doubt if Frederick *could:* and, even, if he *would.* It need not be that he is superior to it, but that he can't care for it—*I can.* Some people can't see colours as that which they are—*I can.* Is this world very much to me? How much? Shall I ever belong to it as Frederick's wife? Will

the thought of it have power over my happiness?"

She was only stating cases to herself, and putting queries. She never stopped to answer one of them.

After breakfast Frederick came. He was not expected. He came saying he had to go on the expected journey that afternoon, and wanted a gossip with Lizzie.

"Come, Marian, come with us. My father wants you both to luncheon; then I can have Lizzie all to myself."

They went off in a cab, and, in good time, got to Mr. Naylor's house. Frederick and Lizzie were soon strolling among the flowers and shrubs.

"When I come back I shall have three days' rest, and then I shall have to go across the Channel. I am going because I have sent plans for the building of a very magnificent château. I shall succeed—I feel sure of it already. If so, I must go again

before long, and, on that journey, shall you be with me, Lizzie?"

She blushed like a rose.

"It would suit as to time nicely," he said. "This first visit I shall be in Paris for a week only—I have splendid introductions. You know you are going to marry a working-man, darling."

"I like *that*, and I like you," said Lizzie. "But I want to say something. Please don't make so much of my being in a smart gown, and going out with lords and ladies."

"I like a smart gown. I intend to see you always beautiful. And I shall see as much of lords and ladies as you will."

"But you felt something last night."

"Don't you feel something now?"

"Yes, I feel as if I could never bear you to be displeased with me."

"My darling!"

"And I feel as if I did not wish you to be suspicious or unjust, so that I should be

driven to make stupid sacrifices silently, to prevent your being vexed."

"Yes," said Frederick, gravely. "Now, my dear Lizzie, listen—here, let us sit down, Lizzie."

"Well?"

"I am going to say a great thing."

"Say it, pray."

She was laughing.

"If you were to give me up, I am sure, with your beauty, sweetness, respectable birth, grand connexions—through Herbert's marriage—and by Lady Florence's influence, you could make a very fine match, and be admired in that world of which yesterday you had a glimpse. I brought you here to say so. With me you will see hard work, such success as some genius and true perseverance may expect, and you will be the first thing in a man's life, the first thought in his heart, the great object of his worship, the absorbing blessing which, to him, will represent all others; but you will never be

on the same level with those great ones, though you may have more than enough of money and time. *Their* lives are altogether other lives than *ours*. I want you to know all this, because I want you to do all with your eyes open. I could not bear you to break my heart by ever feeling yourself a disappointed, thrown-away woman. Why, I think I should go mad," said Frederick, in a hurry.

Lizzie remained quite silent. He watched her, and did not attempt to go on talking. Then she said,

"You have spoken quite truly. I ought to do it with my eyes open. They have been opened, and I am glad. I accept your picture of what my future might be. I declare I never knew till yesterday the value of good looks, or how fine it is to be a pretty girl. Well, Freddy, I have chosen."

He looked up with a very frightened face. There had been an unwonted tone of banter in her voice.

"Which?" was all he said.

"Why, *you*, of course. I want to be happy—can't you give me happiness? I want to be *your* happiness, if I can."

Then Frederick rose up, and thanked the Giver of all good gifts solemnly for what she had said to him. But she asked with a droll smile,

"Am I to be Teresa's bridesmaid?"

"Be what you like. Do what you like. From this moment let our mutual trust be perfect."

"Then I will judge for myself when the moment comes," she said; and they walked away in a lover's ramble, and in blissful confidence and peace. Just as they got back to the house, he said,

"Then when I pay my second visit to Paris, you will go, too?"

"Yes," she whispered, and walked quickly on to Marian and old Mr. Naylor, and began to talk to them.

The very next day Herbert Harcourt

arrived in London. He always went to a clerical club, of which he was a member, and where he was even more than usually well received. In the afternoon he got to Trowberry Terrace.

It was an unfortunate day for him to pay his mother a visit. The gas-pipes in the streets were being taken up, and there was an examination making into the state of underground things in general—the result being the most curious amalgamation of scents—gas, onions, ashes, and soap-suds being among those easiest discerned. It vexed Herbert, and made him look angry.

When he got upstairs, the girls were out, and, as he could not stay long, that also vexed him; and his mother was sprinkling Condy's disinfecting fluid over the staircase and on the landing, having pinned something closely resembling a canvas wrapper all round her, to protect her dress under the operation. She was very glad to see him, and began to disencumber herself of

her bottle, brush, broken basin, and impromptu apron, while he stood by gazing at her with a strange smile, which made Mrs. Harcourt a little indignant and very uncomfortable.

"These things ought to be done, Herbert, if not for our own sakes, as part of our duty to our neighbour. How can we tell the nature or effect of such a scent as is in that street? I sent the girls away. You should not look so disgusted."

"But I thought you yourself felt it to be disgusting?"

"Yes, but I do my best to correct it. I have not seen you for three months."

"Well, suppose you let me kiss you," said Herbert.

Then they kissed each other, and Herbert shut the door, and they both sat down.

"Now tell me about Miss Mawley," she said.

"She sends you her love, and her photograph."

Mrs. Harcourt looked at the picture.

"She is scarcely pretty, but it is a pleasant face. I hope I shall love her. It would be a great trial not to love the wife of my only son."

"Mr. Mawley wrote, and she got the letter last night, that he wanted Lizzie to be a bridesmaid—why not Marian instead?"

"He has never seen Marian—Marian has never been asked—Marian wouldn't. Marian had a very insolent call from Mrs. Belville, and she told that lady her mind, and Mrs. Belville told Mr. Mawley."

"How do you know?"

"Mr. Mawley, in some confidential talk we had, told me. She said we quite disapproved of the marriage, only nobody had any right to dictate to you."

"That is lucky," said Herbert.

"And, pray, why should you dislike Lizzie to be at your wedding as her bridesmaid?"

"I should have liked it under the old

circumstances; but wherever she goes now, she goes as the promised wife of Mr. Naylor."

"I am very glad of it," said his mother.

This was the nearest thing to a quarrel that mother and son had ever had. Herbert was very vexed; but they had got wrong, and he did not know how to right it.

"Herbert, what in the world should make you so vexed about Mr. Naylor?"

"The marriage is out of her own rank—that is always bad."

"What is Miss Mawley going to do for *you?*"

"Among gentlefolk there is always an equality of the best kind."

"Well, Lizzie's rank meant *penury!*" Mrs. Harcourt spoke the word with great decision, and plainly, as if she liked it. "Her prospects in life were *nothing*. Now she will have comfort, money, work, which does everyone good, and an excellent, accomplished man, who loves her fondly."

"I have heard all that before," said Herbert.

Mrs. Harcourt waxed angry.

"If you wanted the girl to remain single to gratify your pride; if you wanted her to marry a needy man with a good name, like yourself; if you wanted me to dress her, and send her forth to sell her beauty to some selfish millionaire, who might want a lovely creature such as she is to be at the head of his table, then you are disappointed. She is going to a good home, and a good husband. I shall live, I hope, to see her a good wife and mother. Now hold your tongue on that subject. She has a better chance of happiness than Teresa Mawley. Would you like some luncheon?"

Only once or twice in all his life had he ever seen or heard his mother as he saw and heard her now. She had been goaded into what, to her, was even the coarseness of truth—but it was truth, and he knew it.

"I will make her happy, dear mother,"

he said, gently. "I love her with all my heart. No man ever loved a woman better. Please to hope the best."

"My son," she said, solemnly, "don't begin by being ashamed of your own family. We have never quarrelled with our fate. We have had the grace to keep silence. There is happiness everywhere, if we know how to look for it. In my saddest and most angry moments I have had to acknowledge that with thanksgiving."

The son bowed his head, rebuked. But all the time he felt that he could not bring Teresa to see his mother in Trowberry Terrace; not even after the gas-pipes were mended. For, before parting, these lovers had also had an interview, and its recollection was all alive in his gratified soul.

In Lady Mawley's conservatory, now opened to the sweet Spring air, they had sat and spoken of the sunny life before them. Teresa had no fears, no wants. What did lovers like them require beyond those neces-

saries of life which were already secured to them, and the society of their two devoted selves? To her it was life's "spring-time, when every month is May!"

He had spoken of his mother, whom he loved, and Teresa had promised to be devoted to her. They had read Mr. Mawley's account of his visit, and Teresa had declared that she also was longing to visit her. They read of his admiration of Lizzie, and Teresa had been so glad that she was pretty, and knew quite well that she was exactly like her brother. There was not a shadow of misgiving. It was broad sunshine, with skies unmarked by a single cloud.

They had wandered forth into the lovely deer-park, and among the hawthorns of a hundred years' growth; huge, knarled, with tangled branches and green leaves, half-hidden by the wreathing, snowy blooms. They said how lovely the world was, and how happy! They spoke of Mr. Mawley's marriage, and praised Lady Florence in con-

cert. Mr. Mawley was the luckiest man in the world, except himself, said Herbert; and Teresa declared that her father's having secured his own happiness took away from her full cup of bliss the one only bitter drop it had ever contained.

So then, after mutual vows—and they were never tired of reiterating those tender declarations—after assertions on both sides of perfect rest in each other's love, and of unclouded joy, Herbert left her to run up to London to buy the wedding-ring. It had taken a long time to get the proper measure, but he took it at last, and declared that he had not minded the trouble the least bit; and, in fact, he had had the little ring in his waistcoat pocket when his mother had spoken in those inharmonious strains of vexatious warning; so he thought it wisest not to show her the ring, though he many times touched it with the end of one finger, to make sure that it was safe. He gave her a son's embrace, begged her

pardon if he had seemed any way wrong in her eyes, declared once more his perfect happiness, and his security of constant life-long joy in Teresa's love, and went away.

"And I never saw him!" exclaimed Marian, when the sisters came back. "Oh, dear! how strange it all seems! What a separating thing this love-affair of Herbert's is! I thought I was always going to be so close to him, and I declare I don't know where he has got to, nor where I am myself!"

"He was looking well," said Mrs. Harcourt, "only he was so put out by the opening of the gas-pipes. It was very bad —worse than when you went out."

"Indeed!" said Marian.

CHAPTER II.

ANOTHER TRIAL.

"Come, let us now resolve at last
To live and love in quiet;
We'll tie the knot so very fast,
That Time shall ne'er untie it."

"THIS is Trowberry Terrace," said a lady in an open carriage. "I know it quite well, though I never observed the name painted up at the corner before. Ninety-seven will be close by—we are among the high numbers. There it is! Mother, will you stay in the carriage? It is on the shady side."

"Yes, Florence; but don't stay too long."

The young lady gave her card, and as quickly as possible at the door appeared

Lizzie herself, all smiles and blue muslin; Lady Florence stepped forward quickly, and both went upstairs. There, in the drawing-room, once more looking its brightest, sat Frederick Naylor at the round table; Marian was leaning over him; a very clever-faced, highly attentive individual stood opposite; Mrs. Harcourt, in the sweetest of caps, neat and bright, and in a state of mild rapture, was standing in the middle of the room. Quick greetings were given and received. In a moment Lady Florence was in her element.

"Mr. Naylor, do go and ask Lady Branksome to take half an hour's drive, and then come back for me. I feel as if I must help you in this."

"We want exactly what you can supply," said Frederick, and he rushed away with his message.

Then Lady Florence talked to Mrs. Harcourt and Marian, and they explained things to her. A sudden sympathy, at first sight,

was uniting them. The table was covered with drawings, patterns of old jewelry, with specimen-boxes of pearls and turquoise. Out of old stores of gold and gems they were planning a gift to Teresa Mawley; and Mrs. Harcourt was declaring, from the depths of her justice-loving heart, that these stores, from her own family and from her husband's, who, in the course of nature, had left them to his daughters, were a joint present from them and from herself.

Pencil in hand, Lady Florence began to talk and draw. Mr. Naylor disputed points; she explained, and won the day. He suggested, she accepted; together perfection was declared to be attained. The grave, attentive, and wise-looking individual received instructions, declared himself edified and delighted, packed up the wonders of art and nature, and walked away.

"Now," said Lady Florence, "I want to say what I came to say. I find I have business in Paris. My mother has fallen in

love with Lizzie—perhaps Lizzie has something to do in Paris. Will she go? We shall only be there three weeks. If she may go as my own property for that short time, we shall be so glad of her company. And Paris is something to see; everybody is worth more who has seen it, I should say."

Thanks in profusion were uttered.

"Now I won't take an answer in a hurry. Write to-night. We go the day after to-morrow. I am going to buy things for Teresa, and Lizzie, who must know her brother's taste, can help me. Mr. Mawley will follow us, and escort us home. Teresa, in his absence, will be here in London on a visit to Lady Mawley. They will be married very soon now; immediately on our return, I suppose. Write to-night, dear. Good-bye, I hear the carriage."

Frederick Naylor walked downstairs and opened the door for her ladyship. As he was returning, he met Lizzie on the stairs.

"Stop," she said. "What would you like me to say?"

"Just that which may please you best."

They looked at each other with such honest trust in their faces, it was lovely to see it.

"Are you quite sure?—have you nothing to say to guide me?"

"Nothing. I shall myself be in Paris for a week of that time; the day of my visit is fixed. I shall be in one world, you will be in another. I have no objection. You are my own, and we have our own world, it seems to me, which keeps us from being enslaved by any other."

"Thank you for that bit of truth."

Lizzie had suddenly grown old in wisdom and judgment. She looked in her lover's eyes.

"Some people think a great deal about you, Freddy."

"Yes; I am not ill thought of."

"And you are so industrious and persevering. And you have genius."

"Thank you."

"But it is true."

"Well; I did not make myself," he said very modestly. "Whatever it is, I believe I can't help it."

"I shall go to Paris with Lady Florence. I have been saving money; I shall buy a nice ready-made costume in Regent Street this morning. I shall go everywhere, and make the best of myself. Come and bid me good-bye to-morrow."

"Very well, sweetheart."

There was not the smallest shadow of fear in this brave good man's eyes. Lizzie felt the sanctity of his trustfulness. She whispered, and he bent his head to hear—"I love you, and thank you," she said, and he kissed her softly and tenderly. In another moment they were back in the drawing-room, and he was quickly—though his

heart was agitated with gladness—bidding her mother good-bye.

"I will write to Herbert," said Lizzie; and she wrote a letter which her mother afterwards read aloud with approval.

"I admire the design of the lockets for the bridesmaids, dear Herbert. Frederick says it is good. But I can't be one of the bridesmaids, as you ask me to be in your kind note, because I intend to be married first. I am going for three weeks to Paris with Lady Florence. Frederick will be there on business for part of the time, so I need have no regrets about being away from him. Now I must tell you what we all have been doing. We wished to make Miss Mawley a suitable present. Dear mother has produced those old mounted pearls—some are very large, and their colour is quite perfect—and the old turquoise bracelet, which was broken. Frederick also turned out those lovely old gold things. A design has been made—the difficulty lay in its not being heavy.

Lady Florence came in at a happy moment, and made the right suggestion. I shall not describe it, but, if it looks as well as we expect, it will be quite lovely. 'A design for a princess,' was the last observation. This will be *our* present to your wife. Mr. Rivers will marry me one day next month. Mrs. Garret Naylor, who, with her husband, is to be at the wedding, wrote a note to our dear mother, and sent it by Frederick, and it made mother cry. Who is to give me away? I thought you would, if you did not marry me yourself. But I am too thankful and happy to be vexed."

So the letter was ended, and so the proceedings of the morning were explained, and Lizzie and Marian went forth to buy the new dress.

Lady Branksome laughed that evening, and said,

"So she'll go! And *he* is to be there. She will learn the differences that life makes when he is with his sort, and she is with

you. It's a dangerous game, Florence."

"I don't think so. It is a truth, and she must learn it one day. No such testing would have been necessary if her brother had not been going to marry Teresa. I am doing her a great good. It can't hurt her to be *our* friend. If she still keeps to her choice, I will believe in 'Love and the world well lost.' And what a woman does *from choice* she never regrets."

"Lord Plinborough will be in Paris," said Lady Branksome. "After his great admiration of her the other day, what shall you do?"

"Ask him to dinner," said Lady Florence.

And then her mother laughed heartily, and wondered how it would all end.

"But really, Florence, I believe he would marry her."

"He may be wise enough. I can't tell. He is a widower, and not too old; preyed on, too, by expectant nephews and nieces. I should not be the least surprised if he pro-

posed. Only I thought Mr. Bellingsby was also in earnest. What a stir she made! He is younger than Lord Plinborough, and he has never been married. He is always in sorrow for some one; but I like him very much."

"I think him too good to be disappointed," said Lady Branksome. "I like him very much, and I can remember all about him. He turns out to be the heir of a property that Mary Clayford had unjustly held. He has behaved so well there; done so much good among the people. We used to know Danesford Hall. It was close to the Towers, Mary Bardolph's place. He really is too good to be vexed."

"Oh! I can't help that. He must take care of himself. And really he has been inanimate so long that a little waking up will do him good."

In these dispositions the visit to Paris was undertaken. Lizzie enjoyed herself to the

very utmost. Every day was full. Mr. Mawley had followed them the next day, instead of waiting. He left Teresa under Lady Mawley's care, who had put off her visit to London; so the lovers had life to themselves in the park, and in the soft shadows and gay lights of the charming old house, dreaming of their future, and finding it an extremely agreeable state of existence.

Herbert was more and more in love every day. He worshipped the fascinating girl who could contemplate no sorrow in her future, no possibility of storm in her Summer sky, because *he* was by her side, making contentment certain, and all life good.

Mr. Mawley, in Paris, was in the highest spirits, and proving the truth of his words to Mrs. Belville, that he was ten years younger since the important question put to Lady Florence had been answered. He was making presents to everyone, and getting laughed at, thanked, and scolded. What was more, Lord Plinborough was

there, and confessedly much interested in Lizzie. When he spoke to Lady Florence, she said,

"I tell no secrets, and I give no opinion. Miss Harcourt is beautiful, wise, and good, and I suppose her fortune may be, in the future, perhaps a little more than a thousand pounds. She is very poor, but well-born and well-bred, as you can see for yourself. The oldest families are not the richest always; the greatest would not lose caste among the heralds by marrying a Harcourt. But I have no genius for settling young ladies. I have no experience of them. I don't think I was ever a young lady myself."

It had been with an odd, grave, half-frightened shyness that Lizzie had allowed Mr. Bellingsby to introduce himself to her. He thought her very beautiful and very reserved. She was always thinking of the time when she heard of Patty's death, and of when her mother and Marian visited her

at Amiens, after the death of her father. She could not speak without shyness to the Alfred Bellingsby of her childish days, who had developed into a rich man, and Lady Florence Reinecourt's friend. She had not seen him since she was a little girl. The great silence that had marked five years of her life constrained her. Mr. Bellingsby was a very quiet, self-contained man; and she thought he was always looking at her, and looking with a wondering air, as if he were asking where they had hidden themselves away all this time?

When Lizzie wrote to her mother, she spoke of Lord Plinborough, and said how much her friends seemed to like him; and she told them that Alfred Bellingsby was there, and that she knew too little of Portspadron to talk to him.

"I can only remember Patty giving me lessons in drawing," she wrote; "and of course I dare not talk of that. He is grave, and learned, and has been sailing round the

world, I should think, from what Lord Plinborough says of him. Lord Plinborough is a great traveller himself, but he prefers land to sea. It is, however, very agreeable to meet Mr. Bellingsby. Talking to him, and listening to him, is like being gently waked out of sleep, and remembering a dream."

CHAPTER III.

FAREWELL.

O Melancholy, linger here awhile!
O Music, Music, breathe despondingly!
O Echo, Echo, from some sombre isle.
Unknown, Lethean, sigh to us, O sigh!

KEATS.

FREDERICK NAYLOR arrived in Paris. Mr. Mawley, who lived at an hotel about five minutes' walk from Lady Florence, met him in the street unexpectedly, and being at peace with all mankind, and having heard a great deal of the wonderful necklace making for his daughter, he turned and walked with him, asking as to what he was then doing and going to do. Then he

invited him to a late dinner, and Frederick went, and Mr. Mawley was delighted with his guest.

"You have no idea how much I learnt from him," he said to Lady Florence eagerly; and she quietly replied,

"Oh! I have long known Mr. Naylor."

He had written to Lizzie, and "We can ask him to lunch," said Lady Florence to her—"or stay, we shall be quite alone tomorrow—shall he dine?"

"I don't know," said Lizzie.

"But you can advise me," said Lady Florence, laughing.

"Yes, I should advise you to do the natural thing, and no more."

"Oh!"

Lady Florence wrote a note and asked him to dinner. It seemed to be a sort of soothing to her sense of justice to do this. She was so decidedly giving other men their chance. He wrote a refusal—he was engaged. In a note to Lizzie he said, "I am

going to a great *soirée* at the Duke de Champfleurs'. How glad I am that my mother was a governess, who taught me to speak French before I could write English!" She laughed, and Lady Florence's glance expressed the wish to read the note.

"He is a simple-minded creature," she said, "with all his genius."

"He is true," said Lizzie; then—"Lady Florence, will you do something for me?" She was blushing more than pink; her face was crimson, her eyes bright with tears. "Will you tell Lord Plinborough that I am engaged to be married?"

"Why?"

"Because, if he is—I can't say it—it sounds so silly; but he ought to be told of it."

"Do you mean that you suspect him of being on the point of a proposal? It would be a brilliant settlement."

"I think I will go back to England—I could go by myself."

"We are all going next week. Lizzie, under such circumstances, as you could never have had such opportunities before your brother's engagement, all the world would hold it fair for you to say to your *cher ami* that you liked to enter on a different life, and fill a more exalted position. No man of honour would hold a woman in your circumstances to an engagement. I don't argue one way or the other—I declare a fact. You like truth—I give it to you."

"But I don't want to be dispensed," said Lizzie steadily.

"You *prefer* Mr. Naylor?"

"I think him a grander character a thousand times over. Lord Plinborough is complimentary, but stupid."

"The position is very far from stupid."

"But he is not Frederick Naylor."

"Oh! then it's quite settled?"

"Quite."

Lady Florence crossed the room, looked

with intense earnestness into Lizzie's eyes, and then said,

"A beautiful home is so charming a thing. It is a world—a woman's world—one's own."

"We are going to make one," said Lizzie.

The trial was over—she had stood the test.

"I'll tell him when they are married. *She* will never say one word, for fear of its being remembered, and getting, in time to come, by long keeping, deformed into a boast," thought her ladyship.

The next event was a call from Frederick. He sent up his card.

"You can sit in the bay window, and make yourself agreeable," said Lady Florence. "I am too busy to take any notice of either of you."

Frederick came to say that he was returning to England that night.

"Your brother has sent me a photograph of the necklace. It looks very well; and

Miss Mawley and all her friends are delighted with it. Will you accept it for your scrap-book, Lady Florence?"

She took it with her pleasant, gracious way and sweetest smile.

"So you will leave Lizzie?"

"Business calls," he said. "I am working for her, you know."

"Are you the Monsieur Anglais to whom this paragraph refers?" she asked, taking up a pamphlet from the table.

He glanced at it.

"Yes, I am. The world is more good-natured than some people think. In my case I have proved it."

"What you said was good and true. You have an excellent facility in the language. But how came you to know so much of the art of stone-carving?"

"Because everything is *one*, I suppose. To a man with a pursuit there is but one thing, and to that one over-ruling idea everything good fits in."

They gossiped on a little longer; then he went away. Lady Florence had left the lovers considerately alone, by some excuse, for a few minutes. When he was gone, she took Lizzie by the hand, and said, "*Perhaps you are right.*"

There were a few days more of brightness and business, which in itself was a gaiety. Lady Florence had bought the few things she required; Teresa's trousseau had been completed; Mr. Mawley had spent heroically, in honour of his coming happiness; at last the day of departure was fixed. They were to spend a few days at Amiens, where Lizzie was to see old friends, and go to Boulogne, where Lady Branksome had some acquaintances, and where Frederick Naylor's little nieces were at school.

They loitered, and, in consequence, when they were to embark for Folkestone, they found Mr. Mawley ready to go with them. He had changed his route, and overtaken them. They all got on board the packet

together, in the glorious splendour of a Summer's day. The passage was perfect. They sat under an awning, laughing the hour away. When near the coast, Mr. Mawley had an accident. He was fetching something from the cabin, and he fell. He was brought up on deck. A surgeon was on board, who gave some simple directions; and Mr. Mawley spoke pleasantly from his mattress, and regretted the trouble he was giving; and that he had sent his servant to London by the other route.

Lady Florence, pale, frightened, but steady in every word and action, spoke to Lizzie.

"Dear girl! He is very ill. I am thankful you are with me."

The surgeon, however, only said,

"Get Mr. Mawley into some quiet place, and send for medical advice. I cannot stay —I wish I could. I have to proceed to town immediately. Mind what I say."

His face said more than his words. Lady Florence read his manner as he meant her

to read it. She pressed Lizzie's hand, while she thanked him in gentle words. The moment they reached the pier, she said to Lizzie,

"Take my mother and her man-servant. Get us lodgings. Send the man back."

Not a word of difficulty came from anyone. They all felt in bondage to a great calamity. Lizzie did her part; Lady Branksome was in tears and trembling.

The lodgings were got by the help of a medical man, to whom they first went, and who returned to the vessel with the servant. Then, in the lodgings, they prepared everything.

"Keep out of sight, Lady Branksome. I have a feeling that he would rather be left to Lady Florence. Here comes your maid, with a carriage full of luggage."

Everything was ready and quiet, when a corpse-like form was brought into the house, and laid in a room downstairs, which had been already arranged, under Lizzie's management, as a bed-room.

"If there are any friends who ought to know, you should send a telegram," said Dr. Broughton, to Lizzie.

"What is there to say?"

"He may live a few hours longer," was the answer.

So she telegraphed to Herbert, to Lord Mawley, and to Mr. Belville; and then returned to Lady Florence and said,

"Do you know?"

"Yes, my dear girl, yes," and she burst into tears, sobbing in Lizzie's arms. "Oh! I had grown very fond of him," she said.

They waited on him with their beautiful womanly ways; fed him with their own hands, for he was paralyzed; comforted him, and told him, on their knees by his side, the whole truth.

About midnight Herbert, with a sad, worn face, was with them.

"How ill you look!" was his sister's first anxious words.

"Do I?" He spoke to her very tenderly.

"I have not been in bed for three nights. My dear old friend, the Rector, has been ill. I never left him. He died this morning."

A sudden pang went through Lizzie's heart. Even at that moment she remembered that Herbert *might* be, for a time, a penniless man. He seemed to read her thoughts.

"Before Lord Mawley knew me he had promised the living to an old friend," he said.

She led the way to the sick man's side. The wan eyes got for an instant full of light. The lips moved. He was holding Lady Florence's hand, or rather she was holding his. He seemed to make a movement with the other, and Herbert took it. The glad, thankful eyes wandered from one to the other, and then closed. Herbert dropped upon his knees in an agony of grief. Lady Florence placed the yielding arms straight by the dead man's side, closed his eyes gently, smoothed away the hair from his

fine forehead, told Herbert to help her, and with him raised him higher, and left him ready for the end.

* * * * * *

"Oh! never mind about the living, and Herbert being out of work," said Lady Florence to Lizzie. "Teresa will have more than three thousand a year. Only just the Grange House, and the land that was apportioned to it, goes to Lord Mawley. It was formerly part of the Park."

* * * * * *

Lizzie was once more at Trowberry Terrace, and the month of June was in its prime. But she was not to stay there long. There was the prettiest of weddings at the parish church. Herbert gave her away. He was pale as a statue; as beautiful in his pallor as the Apollo Belvedere, and as speechless. If the words were formed by the lips, he had no voice to utter them with. But he put his sister into the carriage with eyes ful of unshed tears, and gave his hand kind-

ly, with a terrible effort at a smile, to Frederick Naylor.

"Come back with me," Lady Florence said, with the old twirl of her parasol, and the gentle, commanding manner, that the curates of other days had liked so well; "you are not wanted here."

CHAPTER IV.

BITTERNESS.

I pr'ythee send me back my heart,
Since I cannot have thine;
For if from yours you will not part,
Why, then, should'st thou have mine?

SUCKLING.

JUST for a short time that world with which we have to do seemed to stand still; then a call was paid at the bijou residence of Lady Branksome and her daughter.

"If you only would be so good, and do what can't help being so very disagreeable," said a small trembling voice, the sound of which was like a rill of water making ridi-

culous little splashings over scraps of marble and crystal-covered stones.

"What made you think of coming to me?" was asked, in the mellifluous tones of Lady Florence Reinecourt.

"Oh! Lady Branksome advised me. I asked her. If you would be so good. You know them all, and I never had anything to do with his family. I want to be kind —I want it to be done in the best way. Amelia Belville would be rough, though she is very well-judging. If you *would* be so kind, Lady Florence!"

"If anything has to be done, Teresa, I will do it, if I can. If Herbert could only be persuaded that he was well rid of you, perhaps we could save his life."

Teresa Mawley grew red in a moment, and the tremor went out of her voice.

"I could not help seeing the sense of all Amelia said. It was different when Mr. Harcourt lived at the Rectory; and, of course, I naturally thought he would always

live there; and living close to my own people gave me my right position. With you and my poor father at the Grange, what more could I have wished for? I should really have lost nothing. But with Marmaduke going to be married to that pretentious Lady Mary, and that dreadful Duchess perpetually with her daughter, and all of them at the Grange, and treating Mr. Harcourt not at all respectfully——"

"Nonsense! A woman with three thousand a year can marry any man, if he be a gentleman, whom she loves. If all the Duchesses in Great Britain could be melted into one, they could not interfere with her. You have been inventing excuses. The real truth is that your money has made you something else, and you would rather be Lady Plinborough, as you are now going to be. I hope you'll like it."

"There is nothing against Lord Plinborough," said Teresa. "He never proposed till he knew from my own lips that

the marriage with Mr. Harcourt was given up. I told him last Monday, and he proposed yesterday. It is very hard to have you impute improper motives to me, when I have just taken you into my confidence. I really felt, when I came here this morning, and consulted Lady Branksome, that I knew nobody else who had a knowledge of all parties."

She paused, as if for want of breath. She was not talking the least like the gentle. engaging girl who had been only a few months before enacting love-scenes with Herbert under the trees in Mawley Park. She was querulous and sharp-looking, with the manner of one who had been ill-used, and yet had not the courage to be honestly resentful.

"Have you anything more to say, my dear?" said Lady Florence, calmly.

"Only that, as you know and like the Harcourts, and Mr. Reinecourt used to be so fond of him——"

"Let Mr. Reinecourt alone, please."

"Well, if you don't do this for me, the lawyers must."

"Just say exactly what you wish."

Teresa produced a large packet; it had, in fact, been brought into the room from her carriage when she arrived, and put on a table by her side.

"All these things have to go back." She untied the parcel. There were a few morocco cases, which she opened one after the other.

"My goodness!—why, there is the wonderful necklace!" exclaimed Lady Florence.

And then that lady, with her face full of provoking laughter, took up the things carefully, and laid them open before her.

"The lovely necklace! The very one I helped to design. This bracelet is very good—quite a specimen. It must have been his grandmother's. I shall tell them to send it to the South Kensington Museum. This locket, with these large pearls, and this

lovely workmanship, must cost you a pang to part with; and two rings, modern, and very well chosen. Of course they must all be returned. You must seal them up, and, so sealed, ask your lawyer, as you suggested, to forward them to Mr. Harcourt's direction. It may cost you a blush, my dear. But this kind of thing ought to be done in the coldest and most business-like way. I think, however, that he may be sailed for Madeira. Direct it all to his mother. She is sufficiently strong in mind and body to bear the shock; and from her you can get acknowledgment of their safe arrival. *I* could not do it for you. It is not a gentlewoman's work."

"I will do it here, then," said Teresa; "and if you will take me with you when you drive, we can leave the things together. Perhaps you would not mind doing that."

"I will do that much with pleasure," said Lady Florence.

So the thing was done. The thing that

finally separated a man who had been intoxicated with love for a pleasant-faced, sweet-mannered, romantic, lovely girl, till money came. Money, the vulgariser, the destroyer.

In Amelia Belville's hands she had been changed. Probably nature had not given her any great strength of mind or sincerity of heart. She had only been woman enough to enjoy being loved. Herbert had been quite the hero of that small world made by the Park, the Grange, the Rectory, the village, with its worshipping poor people, and the neighbourhood of richer friends.

But when the change came; when her father's death had made a great lady of her; when the old Rector's death had sent Herbert out homeless for a time; when the Duchess and her daughter—Marmaduke's bride—took possession, and looked on her as the victim of an almost pitiable romance —for they had never seen Herbert; when she went to stay with her sister, and heard

every day that she was a match for anybody, and was worn down with repeated wonderings as to what she could see in an obscure family reduced to Trowberry Terrace, lodgings, poverty, and finding their husbands—Mrs. Belville liked to deal in generalities—among risen tradespeople; when she cried with vexation, and wore out Herbert's heart with repeating the warnings for ever given her, that she would repent one day—that more than three thousand a year was not a thing for a needy clergyman to give up, but that so large a fortune made it just and right that she should reconsider the great question of life, and choose among her equals; when she had wearied Herbert, who was temporarily serving a friend's church in London, for two guineas a week, and paying half that sum for his lodgings; when she was ashamed because he could not afford to keep a horse, and ride in the park; when, in about six months, she had worn the music out of her voice, and the

sweetness out of her smile, and was growing every day more *exigeante* because she was rich, then Herbert said that there was no need to delay their marriage any longer, that sufficient time had elapsed since her father's death, and that it was bad for both of them to lead lives so separated and so sadly evil. And then she also spoke—spoke as Amelia had taught her; said the match with him was a bad match, and one he ought not to press her to make.

Gold had done its evil work. Herbert went away silently; and Teresa cried bitter, angry tears. She was angry with herself, with her past and her present, and uncertain and miserable as to her future. But Amelia's gibes had ceased. Amelia treated her with a tender sort of respect, petted her judiciously, and said *people*—what a convenient word!—had been to blame ever to allow a young, attractive, innocent girl to get into such an entanglement.

And so a short time passed, and then came

a pleasant distraction in the choice of silks and satins, and she and the Belvilles took a run of a few weeks to the south of France, and met Lord Plinborough, and returned to London, followed by his lordship, who, having made some inquiry as to a report he had once heard of Miss Mawley's being engaged to be married, was assured by that young lady that no such engagement existed.

"I did once say 'Yes' to a very exemplary young curate—if you wish to be made acquainted with the one great folly of my life. But we found out that it was all nonsense, and that we were by no means made for each other. He was very good," she said, with a sigh,—which little sigh Lord Plinborough liked,—"and I daresay I was not half good enough for him,"—which statement Lord Plinborough doubted,—"and please don't talk about it." Which command Lord Plinborough obeyed.

The next day his lordship offered himself,

with many regrets that he should be twenty years older than she was, and many promises to honour and love her all his days; and he was accepted.

It was not so many weeks ago that she had dismissed Herbert—a dozen, perhaps. She did not now know where he was.

And not even Marian knew of Herbert's sorrow. The subject of his marriage had never been a very agreeable one. Teresa's being with Mrs. Belville prevented any visiting. Her father's death had been regarded as the sole cause of the postponement of the marriage, and that Teresa should have the agreeable distraction of a six weeks' sojourn in the sunny south was not at all wonderful. They were rather glad that Herbert had found work, and two guineas a week, in London. Of course he could not pay for his lodgings, and live on it, but then he had saved a little money, and he would be married so soon.

"Three thousand a year!" Mrs. Har-

court would say it with a sigh; and with a deeper sigh still she would think how annoying it was that they never heard a word about Teresa.

They heard at last. The parcel came from the lawyer, and at a terrible moment in their lives. The necessity for Herbert's going to a warmer climate, to avoid the changes of the Spring, had come upon them with a sudden shock.

"He must not wait a week," said the doctor. "A vessel sails almost directly, and he must go."

In the midst of a hurry that stunned Mrs. Harcourt, Herbert, blessing her for the hundred pounds she had given him, and called her savings, bade her and Marian good-bye.

"One word," she cried out, sobbing. "Is Teresa come back?"

"Yes; she came back a day or two ago. Mother, we are not anything to each other now!"

"She has given you up because you are

ill? Has she? Have you?" Marian could not help asking these questions.

Herbert's face flushed. They had no idea he really was so very ill.

"It is all quite right," he said. "The sea-voyage is to cure me. You shall know more when I come back. I shall not stay more than two months. That, and the voyage home, will be enough."

Marian drove down with him to the vessel. They went in Mr. Naylor's carriage, and Lizzie went with them. They went on board—Lizzie found some friends, people she had met in Paris, and almost forgotten till now she saw them again. They, too, were going to Madeira. They were so glad to see her. They would make friends with her brother; and had she seen Lord Plinborough? He was going down the channel with them. These people were none of them ill—they were going for the sake of the excursion. It was quite a pleasure to see them. Herbert evidently took to

them. Lizzie said he did not look worse than he had looked ever since he had so many months ago come to Mr. Mawley at Folkestone. Voyages did sick people good. And London doctors were always alarmists. And Lord Plinborough would bring bring back news of him. Lord Plinborough would not go further than Falmouth. So the affairs of life and men are disposed of in short sentences, and as the sisters came back, Marian told Lizzie that Herbert and Teresa were separated. But Lizzie, who was exceedingly happy, and quite incapable of taking a sad view of anything, said,

"Oh! it is only some wild sense-of-honour caprice on Herbert's part, because he has a sore throat, and she three thousand a year. You'll see."

And so they did see—what? On their return, Mrs. Harcourt staring at Teresa's packet, and reading the stiff little note announcing that the very unadvised engagement which she had made, contrary to her

nearest friends' advice, with her son having been broken off before accompanying her sister abroad, she had now, on her return, through her lawyer, sent back the contents of the accompanying parcel to Mrs. Harcourt, having heard that her son was leaving England, and having no idea of his address.

In another handwriting Mrs. Harcourt was requested to acknowledge having received the valuables by signing the form enclosed, attached to the short catalogue, which she would find correct.

"She has slain my son!" cried the wounded mother. "I see it all now. Oh! my son, my son!"

CHAPTER V.

ACCEPTED.

Was worth the bow, was worth the archer's might,
That drove such arrows to the mark so right.
SOUTHWELL.

MRS. HARCOURT'S anguish of soul was felt all through the house. The truth of that cry, "She has slain my son!" in the intensity of its terror, was felt everywhere. The gems lying on the table flashed forth the same story—the cold hard words of the note that had spoken of them, the only words that could have been used, said how hopeless was that story.

Quick-coming memories of the vexations which Herbert's changed manner had pro-

duced, came back to each one of them as they all three stood close together in their grief. His vague words and anxious face had been a riddle to them; now the mystery of the riddle was solved. It lay before them. He had broken down under Teresa's faithlessness.

"Nevertheless," said Mrs. Naylor, who was the first to speak, "if only Herbert will not die, he will do better without that heartless woman. I believe death itself might be preferred to living as her pensioner. A woman who could do *that*," pointing to the parcel on the table, "is not worth marrying. He would only have been galled by her money. She does not deserve to be happy; she does not want to be happy. She does not know what happiness is."

So the young wife spoke.

"Oh! to think of what has happened! My son! my son! Whatever she is, she has had power to destroy him. *If he lives!* How can we say the words? If he *lives!*"

Mrs. Harcourt sank into a chair. "Girls," she said, in a steady voice, with the great tears on her flushed face, resting there, as if even her grief was waiting for an answer to the question she was going to ask —"Girls, what are we saying? Never mind about that creature—what are we saying about Herbert? Is he in danger of death?"

Both Marian and Lizzie Naylor felt their poor mother's woe to be a sad sight. They were themselves so troubled that they could scarcely speak.

"Mother, we have only just returned from seeing him. All we know is that they dreaded the English Spring for him. He himself went away in good spirits—he was never more loving to you than when he bid you good-bye," said Marian.

"He has little else to love," groaned Mrs. Harcourt.

"He has more than he had in the old days, before Lizzie had a husband," said Marian, gently. "Don't let us think any

more of Teresa Mawley. Let us think that Herbert has made a mistake—had an accident, as it were, and an illness in consequence, and now he is gone away to recover."

"That is the best way," whispered Mrs. Naylor.

"And *your* grief is *our* grief," said Marian. "We need not allow Miss Mawley to make us *all* miserable. Herbert has known all this a long time, comparatively. It comes on us suddenly—*to-day*. The time for grieving was over before we knew enough to begin. Let us forget Teresa Mawley; and Lizzie will want tea before she goes. When did you order the carriage to come for you, my dear?"

"I said 'in an hour,'" replied Lizzie.

She saw that Marian was trying with all her strength to bring their lives back to its daily routine—the common-sense force of *making no difference* was sure to have great power over such a creature of habit as Mrs.

Harcourt had become. But Lizzie knew her sister's nature thoroughly well, and she knew that Marian was suffering terribly under that calm exterior of manner and action with which she could pour out tea and talk in a practical way to her mother. Mrs. Harcourt yielded—she said,

Yes, Herbert had known it all for fully three months, perhaps. Of course none of them knew the exact time—it was before Miss Mawley went abroad. "But if it should kill him!" she exclaimed, with a low cry of grief—"oh, Marian!"

"Mother, dear mother, an east wind might kill him—don't talk of possibilities."

"Oh! Marian."

"Yes, you used to be nervous about him when he was a boy."

"Indeed I was. And such a beautiful child!"

Her mind went back to the time when she lived in calm admiration of all that belonged to her; when her days were a morn-

ing noon and night of placid contentment; when nothing ever went wrong, and she lived in the dignity of wife and mother—mother of the most beautiful children in all the world.

"He is handsome enough now," whispered Marian, touching her mother's tear-stained face with a handkerchief.

Mrs. Harcourt gave a little nervous laugh.

"What is that?"

"Mr. Naylor's carriage for Lizzie."

"Good-bye, mamma."

Mrs. Harcourt got up from her chair with sudden energy.

"Here, Lizzie, take those things; I will sign that receipt; you can leave it as you pass. Take them all away, and ask me no questions. I forbid that young woman's name ever being mentioned in my house, and I never desire to see anything connected with her again. You can tell Frederick and his father; we have no secrets. I am proud of my son, and he will do better—if

he lives. He was very delicate as a boy. How well I remember—well, never mind. You should not keep the horses waiting, Lizzie. Good-bye, my love. Come again soon. We can't hear anything of Herbert yet."

Marian had certainly presented the true practical view to her mother's mind. The blow had fallen on Herbert weeks, or even months ago; it was of no use to sorrow after the proper time—it was too late for grief. Let Miss Mawley, and all that belonged to her, depart out of their lives.

But the best preachers occasionally fail in their practice. Marian felt heart-broken. On her knees in her bedroom she prayed for Herbert's life. He had been her delight, her pride, her glory, and her vexation; he had been the one thing about them that had not fallen. He had always been the father's only son, the scholar, the gentleman, with a place which no one disputed in the world out of which *they* had passed,

to be forgotten, or only wondered over, with a "Dear me! is his mother alive, and sisters? I have not thought of them for an age!"

Marian suffered all the more from having from the first feared for Herbert. It had been impossible for a person of her independent spirit to like the idea of her hero being over-much indebted to his wife. She was glad that the marriage was not to be, but she was wounded through her brother's heart. And then she could recall so much in the last few months which her mother had never seen. She had felt, with a keenness that characterized her strongly, that Herbert had *tried* to win his way back to the old place, which he had seemed to turn his back upon when he became Teresa's lover. The memory of these little tendernesses came back as she wept agonizing tears over the fact of his being away, ill, sad, and lonely. If she had known it four-and-twenty hours before he went, she would

have gone with him. To have him thus out of reach was wretchedness. She had been almost harsh to him when those few words had passed in which he had spoken of Teresa. He had either repulsed her, or been too weak to speak. "You shall hear all when I come back—in two or three months." *That* was what he had said, and it had completely silenced her. Bitterly as she feared for his health—dearly as she loved him—she could not ask for explanations, when *he* thought they could *wait*—yes, wait for months, before they could know whether his illness was a possible summons from the great Giver of Life, or the result of a blow from an unfaithful woman.

With her heart swelling to comfort him—longing to hear his dear voice speaking as in the old days, when he could not live without her sympathy—hungering after confidence, but only allowed the poor consolation of the most common-place expres-

sions, they had parted—parted, while he watched, with an amused sort of smile, how his beautiful sister was greeted by people on the ship's deck whom he did not know, so that he had scarcely a spare glance for Marian.

She, with her longing, aching heart, had stood aside while Lizzie introduced Lord Plinborough, and made her friends all promise to take care of Herbert. She, with her fear of his illness being more than he chose to own, had stood there and trembled, while she read on those gay faces what Herbert was thought of by Lizzie's friends. They touched his hand with gentle respect; they looked at him, and spoke with low-voiced sympathy. Poor Marian! she had to give him before strangers the last look, and turn away; and now, on her knees, weeping, she wondered that she had had the power of going away from him. How could she have left him by himself? The few hours that had passed, and the

events that had come with them, had brought to her this miserable moment, when, for Herbert, if he would only now allow it, she would leave her mother, and wait on him for all his life. But it was her own life, not his, that she was to lead, and the recollection of this truth came upon her happily. She gave her life to her good angel's keeping, and lay down to sleep. It was to be peace till the next day.

The day came, as days do come, just as if nothing had happened. Mrs. Harcourt was not at all what Marian had expected to find her. She was quiet and cheerful; she spoke of Herbert without a sigh, and wondered when they could receive their first account of him. If Miss Mawley had indeed been no more than an East wind, she could not have been more utterly left out of all Mrs. Harcourt's thoughts and calculations. Marian was surprised, and very glad; her own heavy heart was as much as she could manage, and for the first time in her life

she leant on her mother for strength.

"I have a sensation that we shall see Lizzie again to-day," said Mrs. Harcourt. "I think she would enjoy a second visit immediately. She might carry pleasanter impressions away with her. Lizzie's life has been so much *here*, that I wonder what she remembers?"

"You know she was at school, and a child. I was not eighteen. You wisely left her at school."

"Were you not eighteen?—is it only five years ago?"

"You have been here five years?"

"And it is five years ago? Marian, I have been blessed in my children—I wish to say so to you to-day—greatly in *you*."

"Thank you, mother." It was as much as Marian could bear, though her mother's sententious manner would have amused her at any other time.

"And, as I said, I have a feeling that Lizzie will be here again to-day. It would

be the natural thing to do, and I think she will do it."

Mrs. Harcourt prophesied well. Lizzie came, and old Mr. Naylor came with her. Mrs. Harcourt would never have departed from the duties of a hostess under any circumstances; at this time she was extremely glad to see Mr. Naylor, and she said so. She began at once to put her family and herself, to use her own words, "on a proper footing."

"You have heard of my son's change of prospects. His matrimonial views are departed. We do not trouble over that——"

"All things considered, I should think *not*," Mr. Naylor observed, in a loud aside.

"But we are anxious about his health."

Mr. Naylor had a gentle, consoling sort of way of saying, "Well, well," and "Now, now," and "Dear, dear." There was immense meaning in those words, according to the way in which they were uttered, when Mr. Naylor's voice, with an accurately-

defined intonation, gave them to his friends. His "Well, well," was quite perfect on the present occasion, and Mrs. Harcourt pronounced him several times, after his visit was over, to be a remarkably sensible man. He stayed some time, and then proposed to take Mrs. Harcourt to Kew, where he was going on some floricultural matter. "The sisters will enjoy a gossip," he said. Mrs. Harcourt consented, and Marian and Lizzie were left together.

CHAPTER VI.

THE PAST.

The tender images we love to trace,
Steal from last year a melancholy grace.

ROGERS.

THE greatest luxury in Marian's life at this time was to be alone with Lizzie. They kissed their hands from the window to their mother, as she drove away with the good-looking, grey-haired Mr. Naylor; who, on his part, with his hat off, looked truly unutterable things at his son's wife and her sister.

"Well, well!" A gentle, cheerful sort of resignation was with the well-worn words. "Well, well!"

He was saying, in his honest heart, that the fortune he had striven for, and earned, and multiplied a hundred fold by being in luck's way—marrying his daughter to young Bernard, son of the stock-broker, as honest a man as ever lived, and possessing a prophetic judgment, dear, dear! That this fortune, if not to be enjoyed by the woman who had blessed him as a wife, had better be used by the woman who had blessed Frederick by being *his* wife—no injustice to his daughter meditated in the future, nay, nay! These thoughts of Mr. Naylor's heart were all in his eyes, which might have been, weeping, and on his lips, which were certainly smiling, as he looked up at the two persons who were watching them drive away. Then he turned towards Mrs. Harcourt.

"My dear madam, I am very much obliged to you," he said; "dear, dear!"

She laughed pleasantly.

"My daughter is happy," was her reply.

And what did these daughters do and say as soon as they were left alone?

"Marian, they say it is all because of *me*," said Lizzie.

"What is? What do you mean?"

"Teresa gave up Herbert because I married Frederick."

"How can anybody know that?"

"Mr. Belville is every day in the City. He knows Mr. Bernard."

"Fred's brother-in-law?"

"Yes. And Mr. Belville told him that Teresa could not stand Trowberry Terrace, —those were his very words,—and the sister's marrying old Naylor's son!—those also were his words. I believe it is true."

"Lizzie, are you happy?"

"Happy! Thankfully happy!"

"Then there is no more to say."

"But what a trial for Herbert! What can he feel for me?"

"That you are his benefactress, if he has any senses left."

"That is one of your hard speeches. But I have not told you half."

"Go on, then. I want to hear."

"She is going to be married. It is the most wonderful thing! She is going to marry Lord Plinborough."

"The man you spoke to on board the vessel, and introduced to Herbert?"

"Yes. You remember him. He is a good man; very pleasant. Just old enough for one to feel respectful towards him. I saw so much of him—every day, I think—during that wonderful three weeks with Lady Florence in Paris. Oh! what a time, and what an ending! Herbert's pale face at Folkestone, just after seeing the old Rector die, and learning for the first time that he could not have the living. Poor dear Herbert! The enchanted castle had begun to tumble——"

"Go on about Lord Plinborough," said Marian, with a tremor in her voice. "I want to know about him. Did you leave

him behind you in Paris? And you really liked him?"

"Oh, yes! very much. He had been married; and he had lost his wife a long time before. He was very pleasant and kind to me. So much so that, when I heard he was thinking of marrying again, I was quite frightened; and Lady Florence said things—things that were kind, and true, and worldly."

"And you might have been a Teresa Mawley, if you had liked it, I suppose? And you never told me before."

"There was nothing to tell. I only want to explain to you how well, in that short time, we got to know each other. He admired Frederick; and once, after he knew all, in the prettiest way he congratulated me. I never saw him again till I saw him on board the vessel. And he is going down the channel at this minute, with Herbert, being engaged to Teresa himself.

"I wonder that he never heard of their

engagement. He knew Lady Florence."

"I do not think he did. He had only just come back from the United States. He had been always going to some distant part of the earth. He was at that flower-show. I recollect hearing there that he had just come back. And, you remember, Mr. Mawley's consent had only just been got. Anyhow, there he now is with Herbert. I wonder what they have said to each other?"

"It may add to Herbert's trial. If he hears of Lord Plinborough's engagement, it will be a very bitter addition to all he has had to suffer."

"He only goes to Falmouth. Mr. Belville says he is gone down to find some secluded place in which to spend their honeymoon. Teresa desires retirement—" They both laughed outright.

"Why, Mr. Belville can have nothing else to talk about," said Marian. "Always tell me what he says. I feel as if I could not live without him now." And then, in spite

of their anxiety, they laughed heartily once more.

"But I wish I could have been kept out of Herbert's trouble. I don't like being a character in Teresa's story—I have the decayed gentlewoman's part to perform in this tragedy world, I suppose," said Lizzie

"Oh no; that is *my* part. There is nothing tragic about you. I hope you are not going to be extravagant in your clothes —you are too well-dressed."

"Don't be disagreeable, and never try to avoid the subject on which I choose to talk," said Lizzie. "I have grown up too ignorant of the old life. Was it *great* trouble when our father died?"

"Before that, darling; although he was old, he yet died of it."

"Tell me. Why was I never told all about it?"

"Our mother has had the merit of never complaining. Herbert, succeeding in life, had nothing to complain of—I had to *do*

things. Work and talk do not, with me, go together. I *could not* tell you more than this—I believe I could not, without some great effort, even now, recall particulars—though from the beginning to the end I was the one *used.* I had to read, write, calculate; listen, understand, act—in fact do as I was ordered, but not as a machine; as an intelligent being who had to act on an emergency, and without assistance sometimes."

"And you did it all, when you were not quite eighteen?"

"Yes. It was the best age at which to be useful. There was a woman's brain, and a girl's heart of hope."

"And we were ruined. Who did it, Marian?"

"My mother's only brother. Many years younger. Our dear father had brought him up—he was the darling of *her* father, who had left the orphan boy as a sort of legacy to her. When he became a man, he was

considered a safe and an honourable man of business. Our father trusted him. He got possession of nearly all our property; that which was left was what we now live on, and a thousand pounds which had been put aside for Herbert."

"And our father died?"

"Yes; before you were twelve years old."

"I remember you and dear mother coming to see me at school; and how kind everybody was, and how black I looked, and how I felt in the midst of it all that the girls respected me—" Lizzie's voice trembled as she smiled through her tears. "I don't remember that uncle of ours," she said.

"No. He escaped; left England in a vessel bound for Norway, and was accidentally drowned on the voyage. Do you remember the old home?"

"Yes; but *so* dreamily. I remember stray things—the garden, a dog, a cat, and the day I broke my wax doll. I can

remember the outside things very well—the rookery, the village, the river, and the great hill-side, the cliffs and the sea. I can remember my father on an iron-grey horse, and a carriage with the cream-coloured ponies. The whole thing was extinguished so suddenly that I feel like one left in darkness—when I try to look back I can't see it. Then came *this*. This was the daily truth, memory was stifled, and the past, which you know has *never* been spoken of, became really like a dream. And our mother never complained, never repined, never seemed to have anything to regret except the fact of her widowhood. How odd that seems!" said Lizzie.

"He was her brother, given to her care; and our father was too indolent. He was many years older than she was. Wrongly trusting, he tempted him," said Marian. "She bore it all silently. She might justly have blamed both of them, but *she* could endure, and *I* could work."

"Tell me, did you—in your own heart—did you suffer?"

"The necessity for constant care, the endurance which belongs to perpetual thriftiness, is a severe cross to those who have not been brought up to labour. There are people to whom our poverty would be riches. Knowing that, I did my day's work as well as I could, and was vexed with Herbert, and married you before the time came for you to suffer."

"Oh! what is the matter?"

Marian, leaning back in her chair, was weeping bitterly, stifling her sobs in her handkerchief, and hiding her face in the cushion.

"I am ashamed! Have mercy, Lizzie! I will speak quietly in a moment." Gasping, and still hiding her face, she remained for a minute or two; then she got quiet by degrees, and went on: "It would have been easier to have sunk into another thing at once. Indeed, but for me, my mother must

have done it. One hundred and eighty pounds a year! What riches in another place and in altogether a different condition of life! I could have brought you up in it, for you seemed so very young by my side then, though you are the matron now."

Lizzie kissed her, and she again went on.

"Our mother would not have cared—she would have borne *that* martyrdom with wonderful grace, and become the matron of a hospital; and I might have kept a school. But we could not do that, because of Herbert. We were better hidden, so as not to throw a disgrace on his life. It was my work to endure, contrive, make and mend, cook the dinner, if necessary, wash the fine linen, and teach you. I had also to keep up my mother, to hold her in her place. At first she seemed to have a wonderful faculty for slipping down. It was in the beginning a tangled strife. I had worked night and day to make a decent appearance before Herbert, the first time he saw us in

this house; and then I thought my heart would have broken with a loud crash when he said calmly, 'You seem very comfortable here.' Oh! do you despise me, Lizzie?"

"Why did we never talk in this way before?" said the married sister.

"Before! Why, think how young you are—eighteen the other day. And because you are out of it, I can talk. I used to look at you, and think that I could never bear to associate you with my hard experience. There came a lover, an entreating, admiring lover. Those who have fallen should surely climb up again if they may and can. I had borne the cruel burden of next-to-nothing a year; I had worked with our young maid-servant, and taught *you* to work; but to see you always worn down with what had worn me—no, I could not bear it! It was a golden dream to see you a wife, loved, and in luxury, and the wife of such a man as Frederick. I could not have hoped for anything better for you. My greatest grief

was out of my future. And then Herbert—for whom I had suffered it all—was ungracious. Everything had been done for *him*—this secret life of anxiety had all been for *him;* the untold fears, unseen struggles, had been for *him.* He was our *gentleman,* our *scholar;* my mother was to live with him, and you, too, perhaps, in that future when I thought my hard life would be over, and I might lie down and die if I liked it. How bitter, and how ridiculous and selfish, his love-story seemed to me, as I first read it in his exulting language, when, in his first intoxication, he expected me to rejoice. So there was to be no end of my single-handed strife. The blessing that strengthened me to bear it all was your engagement to Frederick. Can you understand me, Lizzie? And yet I cried myself ill last night because Herbert is alone, and has no one to nurse him. I love him as women always love those for whom they have suffered—women of my sort, I mean. But if my helping you

destroyed him I cannot repent. We were sober, and he was insane in his love for Miss Mawley. I cannot repent, but I feel that I owe him something—and, oh! how I would serve him if I might!"

And now Marian was herself again, calm, and almost hard, once more.

CHAPTER VII.

A VISITOR.

In all my wanderings round this world of care,
In all my griefs—and God had given my share—
I still had hopes, my latest hours to crown,
Amidst these humble bowers to lay me down.

GOLDSMITH.

"HOW do you do, Lord Plinborough?" said Lady Florence Reinecourt, rising from her chair, and scattering half a dozen balls of bright-coloured worsted on the floor. "Oh! dear, what have I done? Don't pick them up. Sit down there. I thought you were in the Far West."

"I am come back," said Lord Plinborough; and then he cleverly got every ball of worsted back by the string that was left

behind, doing it with great gravity, conquering difficulties by skilful little jerks, and quietly picking them up, one by one, and placing them in a row on the table, which was by Lady Florence's chair. "There!" he said, with grave triumph, and much self-approval at his having so successfully condescended to perform a part that had never been intended for him—"There!"

"Thank you," said Lady Florence, with a laugh in her voice. "I feel quite surprised at seeing you."

"You are the only person I have seen," he answered, ignoring, as became him, all the people of the inhabited globe between Paddington and Belgravia. "I thought that you were just the person to speak to."

"Thank you," she said again; but she looked at him with mingled amusement and curiosity, which she was at no pains to conceal. He looked at her, without noticing the effect of his proceedings on her pleasant face. He looked at her black silk dress,

which fell so softly to the floor, and at her red hair, most exquisitely dressed, and gleaming very golden in the light.

She sat there fair and seemly, with a woman's home-things all about her, moving her exquisite hands with graceful skill about her work. He saw it all, scarcely knowing that he saw it, and he had only some impression, as he stared at her dreamily, that the lace, or work, or cambric—the "white stuff," he was interiorily calling it—that fell upon her wrist, was something rare and fine. So he looked at the "white stuff," but he never spoke,

"What have you got to say?"

This seemed to wake up Lord Plinborough, who very slowly dropped out these words—

"A woman should go to him, you know."

"To whom? To Mr. Harcourt?"

"Yes, to Harcourt. He ought not to be alone."

"He is on his voyage to Madeira, isn't he?"

"No; we landed him. He is in a strangely wild and beautiful spot, down there—he seems to know a good deal about it. I suppose he may die, and I don't know his people; only that lovely young girl, you know, Naylor's wife. So I thought I would speak to you."

"Oh, yes! Has no one written to Mrs. Harcourt?"

"He couldn't. I said I would see them."

"How did it all happen? Tell it me from beginning to end. And is it really sad enough to make you look like that?"

"I am so puzzled," said his lordship, gazing on the carpet.

"Don't keep me waiting," entreated Lady Florence. "I saw them yesterday—his mother and sister, I mean. They were so uneasy, because they had expected a letter. I like them very much. Do tell me everything."

There could have been no resisting the pleading of the sweetest voice in the world,

even if Lord Plinborough had had any wish to resist it. He had no desire to be silent; but, having many things in his mind, he was turning them over, and considering with himself upon which he should begin.

"Tell things as they happened. What made you land him?" said Lady Florence.

So Lord Plinborough rose to the occasion, and spoke plainly. He was a man past his youth—a fine, but hard-featured man. His hair was grey, but it grew thickly; and his short beard and whiskers were black as jet. He was one whom it was not easy to rouse out of his habitual laziness. He did daily what he was obliged to do. He had no relish for excitement—for years his life had lain buried with his young wife, and he had only lived because, having a magnificent constitution, he could not help it. When he had seen Lizzie, after his return from years of wandering, it had occurred to him that he might marry. As he knew himself to be one of

the best matches in England, he had never doubted that he could get a wife; but marrying had grown to be something more than getting a wife to this man who had once, for a short space, lived in paradise. Such a person as Lizzie Harcourt might do. He said it to himself many times; then, having heard that she was engaged to be married, he still said it to himself, till it became a reconciled idea, and a thing to be done when the woman was drifted to his feet; for he had not any intention of setting forth in search of her; and so she had come in the person of Teresa Mawley. All this was in his mind when he rose up to speak. He fixed his eyes on a low book-case, which was opposite to him, standing beneath a row of exquisite mezzotints of fair ladies and fine gentlemen in black and gold frames. His eyes wandered from picture to picture as he raised his head and spoke, with a vague sense that they too had lived, and that he

might unconsciously be telling their story as well as his own.

"I intended to land at Falmouth—you know that, I think?"

"Teresa had told me—yes."

"Before we got there, Harcourt was very ill. They demurred about taking him—talked of returning his passage-money. Bellingsby came out with his yacht. It seemed the best thing, the only thing, to get him to go with Bellingsby. He consented. I went too. He knew all about the west coast, so we took him to a sheltered nook with a strange name—Portspadron—and there he is. There are houses there, you know," his lordship explained; "and it is close to the place they lived at once. The people there knew him. The doctor knew him—that was a *great* comfort," said Lord Plinborough, with emphasis. "I stayed with the poor fellow. He's an uncommonly nice fellow."

"I never saw him but once," Lady Florence says softly, thinking of Folkestone;

and she stays her busy, gently working hands, and thinks good thoughts of the dead.

"Well, he *is*, then. I never saw anything more to be admired. He thought himself dying, and he told me something—wished to send something to——"

Lady Florence raised her head, and turned the mildest, gravest of inquiring eyes on her companion.

"To whom?"

"To Miss Mawley," said Lord Plinborough, bravely.

"Did he know you were engaged to her?"

"Oh! not he—he does not know that now; but—" and Lord Plinborough looked savage.

"You said that some of his family ought to go to him—had we not better let them know?" she said, interrupting him. "Other things may wait, but he may not be able to wait."

"The doctor said he knew them, or his

father had known them," Lord Plinborough went on, with a flushed face, and in a harder tone of voice, "and I did not leave him quite alone. There is a Captain Grandison there, whom he had known in his boyhood; they met like brothers, and Grandison—who, by-the-by, was on a visit to Lady Glaucott, whom they all spoke of with veneration, but whom I never heard of before in all my life—well, Grandison is on a visit to this lady; and Harcourt knew Lady Glaucott too, so I left him among friends, and——"

"And yourself came back to tell his family. It was very nice of you," said Lady Florence.

"Not exactly," said the truth-loving man; "but it was necessary to come back, as I had made up my mind *against* marriage with Miss Mawley.

"Oh, but you mustn't!" cried Lady Florence, in a low, frightened voice. "Never mind—never mind; it will all come right."

"Oh! it will all come right," said his lordship.

"Now *don't* be rash—think a minute. It will make such a fuss. You will be her ruin."

"She has killed Harcourt."

"Oh, dear no! If you could have seen him when I did—such a pale, beautiful, interesting ghost! He was half dead then, I think. His mother told me, a few days ago, that he had always been very delicate as a boy. I don't defend Teresa; she acted like a headstrong girl—that had been her way from the very beginning. But you must not blight a girl's life because you are not her first youthful preference—now promise me," and with all the strength of her womanhood Lady Florence pleaded for Teresa. She thought of the girl's father, and she wiped the tears from her eyes; she pleaded Teresa's motherless girlhood, and the probable honesty of her present feelings. "With such a man as you are," said Lady

Florence, "so calculated to make her happy —so fitted to care for her, guide, and protect her—you have nothing to fear. Go and tell her—I will send for her, and you shall meet her here—tell her everything. If you will only be *just* to her, you will be *true* also. Just be guided this little way by me," she said; "the way will be plain then, and you can judge for yourself."

But she might just as well have talked to the granite rocks from which Lord Plinborough had so lately come. He only asked her, with the most admiring smile, whether she would drive him to Mrs. Harcourt—"because I think I ought to see them myself, you know, and you and Lady Branksome generally drive about this hour."

"Oh! you are cruel!" she cried.

"I am too old to take advice, and too hard to be melted even by *you*," he said. "*She lied.* Have you anything to say to that?"

"Why, everybody does that," said Lady

Florence—"that is, when they love people. It is all quite right; their present feelings are warmer than those past facts, and truer than those facts in consequence. The facts as to Mr. Harcourt were nothing in her mind compared with her feelings for you. Of course, I can guess what she said, and, as she loved you, she was quite right. She told you that she had had a silly love-story with a charming curate—I know she did, for she said so; but, of course, she never loved anyone but you."

"But I dislike her extremely," he said, with an air of pleasantry which provoked Lady Florence.

"Oh! take care!—it will get into those horrid newspapers!"

"It won't hurt me—I shall be at Timbuctoo. Are you going to take me to Mrs. Harcourt?"

"No—you are so fickle and so unprincipled! You will fall in love with Marian;

she is far handsomer than Mrs. Naylor. You can send your message by me."

"She—Miss Harcourt—must go to him —Dr. Perran said so, and Herbert expects her. That is the message. I'll go there to-night. Give me their direction, if you please."

"No. It is a secret. You can ask Mrs. Belville where they live." Then she changed her tone of banter. "Lord Plinborough, believe me, a woman is the best judge of a woman. Spare yourself, spare all of us this trial. Meet Teresa here to-morrow afternoon."

"I have no objection, if there *must* be an interview. It will be to part from her. Not to save her life would I marry her."

"Put it off for a week, no one knows you have come back. You like Cowes. Go there for a week, and then come to me. She would make you an excellent wife."

For the first time in her life Lady Flo-

rence was powerless. Lord Plinborough took his hat and went his way; and she was left really sorrowing.

"How men do sacrifice to the imagination!" she thought with a sigh, leaning back in her chair and closing her eyes.

But within the hour she was at Trowberry Terrace, and she found Lizzie Naylor there.

The story, as far as Herbert was concerned, was told in five minutes; and Marian, with her half-dead heart getting quickly alive again, began to arrange her work-box, as a first preparation for departure.

"Mother I shall take you home with me," said Lizzie.

CHAPTER VIII.

A JOURNEY.

"Whither?" says he. Quoth she, "Thy teame
Shall drive to place where groweth creame."
SIR WILLIAM DAVENANT.

NO objection was offered to Marian's going, as Herbert wished, and as Dr. Perran had desired.

"Can I do anything to help you?" asked Lady Florence Reinecourt. She and Marian were alone for a few minutes in the drawing-room, Lizzie having taken her mother away to ascertain what she wanted to be packed up, preparatory to returning with her. Lady Florence looked kindly, anxiously.

"My dear Marian," she said, "I must be able to help you. Tell me how?"

"I have nothing to ask for. Lizzie takes my only anxiety in this place off my hands. If you could help me you should. But I require no aid of any kind now, thank you."

Lady Florence had seen a great deal of Marian since Lizzie's marriage, and she admired her very much. Marian had grown very fond of Lady Florence, and she now looked at her with a grave, loving, good-bye sort of look, which was full of admiration. It made Lady Florence wonder.

"Tell me your thoughts," she said.

"I am glad I did not know you before—not till I had learnt how to balance myself steadily with all my troubles on my head. If you had been by me then, with your dear face, and gentle manners, and soft guiding hands, I should never, no *never* have learnt to walk by myself. I should have longed for your help, looked for it and enjoyed it,

and without it I should have tottered and stumbled, and been the ruin of everyone about me."

"You make me miserable! I never harmed anybody. What can you mean?"

"I think I mean a very solemn thing—that, when we have learnt how to do without human aid, our Heavenly Father gives us human consolation—He gives it when it won't hurt us, when it does one such good as you have done me."

"Thank you," said Lady Florence. "I often feel surprised that I never knew you before—I knew Lizzie well before I knew you. But then we got on quite fast, up the height, to the top of the mountain of friendship, where there are no clouds, only blue sky overhead. I never got so far with Lizzie. She did not want me. She had a husband and a home in view. So we sat down and rested ourselves in a pleasant place by the way. But you, Marian—you have gone with me up to the summit. I

hope you like my allegory. You wanted me, I am sure."

"You have been a blessing to me. How did you manage it?"

"Oh! I was destined to the work. I sketched the old black and white house which you never saw, and wrote the name of Harcourt in my book before I was married. Then the Reinecourt story made it easy to understand the other home at Portspadron. So much Mr. Naylor explained; and then poor Teresa—" and her voice shook, and she wiped her eyes. She was speaking again in a minute after. "I wanted to tell you how much Mrs. Garret Naylor and I have met lately. After Lizzie's wedding we exchanged calls. I like her very much; and her husband is a man to be proud of. I cultivate his acquaintance meekly and devoutly, thinking I may like to know the Lord Chancellor some day. And she has told me so much—*so much*," repeated Lady Florence. "But I shall

always think you wrong for going so utterly out of sight. Hidden even from them. You might all have died, and Herbert might have been the only one left alone. Was it right?"

"Yes, it was right," said Marian.

"Am I to think that you know best?"

"It was quite right. No one can ever know all. Outside things are weak to influence one, compared with that which influences from within."

"You might have hurt Lizzie. It is well enough as it is. You know all about the Naylors; and her husband is delightful. She, too, has all the artist spirit. She is in a life she can enjoy. That is a great thing, people ought to *enjoy* their lives; but if there had been no Frederick Naylor, there might not have been equal success."

"I knew all that. But there is nothing to regret. The right thing came, and *you* came. I have a friend—I feel triumphant —such a friend!—*you!*"

"You make me laugh. But you forget how you have made me obey you. You told me never to bring anyone here. To-day I kept Lord Plinborough away. Was that right? After Lizzie was with us in Paris, I kept Mr. Bellingsby away. Why?"

"Thank you—my mother could not bear it. I know her best. But life is changing now. She likes society with Lizzie—in Lizzie's home. And we have not lost all power of attracting our friends to us. Herbert has kept up his own position with so many."

"And you are going to him now?"

"Yes. I am going to be faithful to Herbert as long as I live, I hope. I wish I could go quicker. I can't get to Plymouth till night, to-morrow."

"And then?"

"I shall find out. I shall be beyond railways."

"Write to me."

"I shall like to do that."

"And remember, I know everything. I intend to go down there one day. I can talk to Mr. Bellingsby of Angersteins and Rosdew. I saw him a few weeks ago. He has come back from voyaging I can't tell where, for months and months. I told him he was seeking a watery grave for himself, and that it was indulging an idle habit; and actually he agreed with me. I have the highest opinion of him in consequence; and then"—she lowered her voice—"he told me of the Black-rock, and how she was killed."

"We saw it—Lady Glaucott and I. I saw Alfred Bellingsby once after that—no more. Herbert says he has lived on the sea."

"Why does not Mary Bardolph ask me down? We knew each other a little once. Tell her so. And now she is lonely; her husband, you know, is gone to Canada; he will be away some time. It was a compliment, and yet everybody said the govern-

ment could not have chosen a better man."

"I saw it in the newspaper," said Marian. "Where is Lady Glaucott, do you know?"

"She is at Rosdew—Lord Plinborough said so—and full of interest in your brother. Shall you like to see it all again?"

"Oh, don't ask me! But indeed I cannot tell."

"Well, write to me. I will not detain you more. Good-bye." And so Lady Florence departed.

Mrs. Grigshaw, who was always a friend in need, at the proper time herself took Marian to the railway, gave her a basketful of food, contrived to get a new railway-wrapper inside the leather strap for her use and comfort, and faithfully stood by till the train was out of sight; then, with many reflections as to Marian's being made out of the right stuff, she turned towards home and Trowberry Terrace.

It was a long journey. Marian travelled alone. She would not have stopped any-

where, if the journey had been twice as long. Night and day were the same to her on the errand she was now upon. Herbert wanted her, and Dr. Perran had sent for her. No will of her own could have lived a moment within hearing of those calls, and as it was, she desired nothing on earth so much as to be by Herbert's side. She was alone, and going as quickly as she dared desire to Herbert, who had said that he wanted her. If a feeling of triumph crossed the heart that only so lately had been bursting with grief because they were parted, she put away and forced aside from her everything that could be of evil in it. Herbert had lost the glitter of a false love, which but basely imitated the best of all, and he had got back the precious metal of her own true sisterly faith—that love which she had given him from her birth—that which had made her suffer for him, and now would give her strength to nurse and comfort him.

As she was going on and on, she thought

of him, but without ever admitting into her heart the fear that he might die. Such a thought could not exist with the living gladness that warmed her soul because she had found him whom she had lost, and was going to help him. Herbert had once more taken his place in their lives; once more she could work and suffer for him, and the risk of moneyed misery with Teresa Mawley was over.

She got to Plymouth at last. She had to think of what she was to do next. Five years had made changes everywhere, and she had literally no idea where she was in the town with which she had once been tolerably familiar. She was not encumbered with much luggage. While she was making some inquiries, with the hissing steam and noise of voices half deafening her, some one said, "Miss Harcourt!" She looked round quickly, and up into a face on which the gaslight fell, and lighted up

into the fullest knowledge. It was Alfred Bellingsby.

"I am here by appointment," he said. "I have been seeking for you at every carriage door. You were quick to help yourself. Your brother thinks you would be best off if you came down with me in the *Fairy*. My mother thought you would do well to trust yourself to me and my yacht, if the weather kept fine. But it is more than fine—it is simply glorious. Everything is in our favour. Here are men for your luggage—come in a cab. We have Mrs. Craven here, the wife of one of my boatmen; you left the Groves in her care when you went away. Do you remember her? My mother thought of sending her to take care of you. She is an excellent sailor."

Mrs. Craven came forward, and made a curtsey. Marian shook her by the hand.

"Remember you, yes! I am so glad. What am I to do?"

"Come away with us, miss, if you please.

'Tis beyond everything on board the *Fairy*. We are ready, Mr. Bellingsby. Craven has got the things, sir."

Marian gave herself up to be guided and cared for. She found herself driven rapidly through the streets, and then placed in a boat, where Alfred took the helm. And through the blue water, in the stillness of the gathering night, with the moonlight getting broken and shattered by the oars of the rowers; with the soft, sweet, refreshing air upon her face, Marian was carried on rapidly, speechlessly, with sounds in her ears like the voices of memory, with the almost incredible thought in her heart that she was hurrying on to Herbert.

Marian wrapped her cloak more closely round her, and looked up at the sky, where the round-faced moon careered along, glad that everything seemed to be going so fast, taking her to the sick man who had sent for her to help him.

She thought that the *Fairy* was a long

way off. She could not measure distances in that strange, deceiving light. The blessed freshness of the air off the waves kissed her face, and she put away her veil that she might get it gratefully. The noise of the railway, the loud, blundering Babel of anxious, urging words, the hot breath of panting machinery, were all in her recollection, as if on purpose to make her feel more keenly the noiseless motion of the boat, and the musical, regular splash of the time-keeping oars. She felt her body swaying lazily as the men bent to their work, and she thought, with an unutterable wonder, of Trowberry Terrace, empty, and of herself now, one of those who, in an open boat, were making a small black spot on the great lighted-up plain of the vast sea, while the clocks from the church-towers behind them sent forth the strokes of midnight on the morning air.

"Here we are!" said Alfred.

He stood up, and helped Marian to fol-

low Mrs. Craven to the deck of the *Fairy*. She stood still and watched the work about her. Mrs. Craven stood by her side—a man touched his cap.

"My husband, Miss Harcourt."

"Yes, Ben. I remember you perfectly. I am very glad to see you both again."

"There's many will be glad to see you, miss," said Ben Craven, and went on to his work.

"She's the beautifullest craft, this *Fairy*, miss," Mrs. Craven says. "I assure you I am *that* proud of this job, and this journey, I can scarcely believe. Mr. Herbert said there was no need for me to come, and I was so cast down—I felt fairly shipwrecked. But I went again to Angersteins, and madam said 'twas her orders; and Mr. Bellingsby never gainsays that."

Marian said some pleasant thing to the woman, but as she stood in the staring, cold, unfeeling light of that unblushing great moon, in the midst of the long black shadows

that were moving about the deck, it seemed to her to be a work of magic. If she had been in a state of enchantment, without any will of her own, it could not have seemed more strange to this young woman, so lately a captive to life's daily drudgery, and breaking her heart about Herbert.

Yet so it was; and she felt that she could not tell how. But she was in the polished oak saloon of the *Fairy*, and—

"There is a note for you," said Alfred. "Herbert supplied me with credentials."

Then Marian read, in Herbert's handwriting, that, if she was there, he thanked her with all his heart. "And everybody is so good to me, I can't help getting well."

When Alfred Bellingsby came to the saloon door, to pay his compliments to his guest, he stood still—he stood still, and dared not enter, for with that opened note on the table before her, he saw a woman kneeling, the light from above crowning

her small beautiful head; and the delicate profile of a sweet and solemn face, quite still, in the act of thanksgiving, was before him. He stood for one moment, and turned away. He went away, feeling like one who had seen a vision—a revelation of life hidden from common eyes. It was to him a sweet, still, solemn sight, telling a great truth—a truth to be remembered. He went up and looked on the blue expanse of sea and sky, and thought of Patty.

Up and down the world, for five years, this man had gone, liked and sought after. Danesford Hall was a beautiful place! Face after face had passed before him, woman after woman he had talked to, but never had he spoken to any one of them of that other woman, whose immortality was like the abiding presence of a living idea—never absent from his mind. The praise his heart now gave to Marian was of this sort, "I could talk to *her*, I think." But after hours

of healthy rest, when, towards midday, Marian came to him, he told her only of how they were sailing, and of when they should get to Portspadron.

"And what have you had to eat? What, only a cup of tea before you lay down to sleep! We cook excellent dinners on board the *Fairy;* and as time was made for slaves, we never ask what o'clock it is. We may dine at breakfast time, if you please."

"Ah! but dinner is coming immediately. I had breakfast hours ago," said Marian.

Time passed on, and the sun was going down. Marian was on deck.

"How is Lizzie?—Mrs. Frederick Naylor?" asked Alfred.

"Beautiful, happy, and good," she answered, with a delighted smile. "You saw her before she was married?"

"When first I saw her I had no idea who she was. I was awkward; she was shy. We neither of us could talk of the past—I

because I knew too much; she, however, knew too little. I have been half over the seas since then."

"Not in this yacht?"

"No; though the *Fairy* has performed wonders, and done justice to her name."

Marian and Alfred Bellingsby were having their tea.

"You know Lady Florence Reinecourt, of course?"

"Yes. Lizzie knew her first. I have learnt to know and love her since."

"She is very generally admired."

"Oh!" said Marian, very busily engaged on a remarkably small biscuit; and filled with a sudden wondering how any one could utter such a trite speech about one who, to her heart, was of such unearthly fascination.

Mr. Bellingsby, in his silent life of observation directed towards the women of his world, had learnt to read all marks of character with terrible accuracy.

"You are fond of her—you give her credit for all that which, to you, is *good*," he said.

"I am quite in love with her," said Marian, frankly. "She has been more than *good*, she has been a *pleasure* to me."

"And you put pleasure first?"

"Yes. I can get my own good out of my own life. It is everybody's possession, who will sow the seed and reap the harvest. But pleasure is the sunshine over which I have no power—which comes as a gift."

"Your sister's feelings about Lady Florence were different from yours—she had got her own sunshine."

Marian was silent—she felt as if she had betrayed herself by talking so freely. She felt as if she had been led on to confess that *she* had no lover in her life; and for a moment she felt vexed.

"Let us get out the shawls and wrappings. You will remember the coast we are coming to. I will leave you to watch for the old sights by yourself."

So Marian saw headland after headland come and go, till the Black-rock stood up with its marble face, and she had reached Portspadron.

CHAPTER IX.

WELCOME.

Me a thousand hopes and pleasures,
A thousand recollections bland,
Thoughts sublime, and stately measures,
Re-visit on thy echoing strand.

COLERIDGE.

AS Mr. Bellingsby consumed a meditative cigar, he thought of Marian. There had long been in his mind a coming woman —was she there? He turned his head. What a sight she made, standing quite still, clothed to the feet in the coarse folds of a rough brown cloak, her arms hanging before her, her wrists crossed, her head raised—a picture of calm, thankful waiting, with the evening light on her pure face; he had a distinct sensation of pleasure in the contem-

plation of its beautiful outline. He saw her smile as the woman he had brought to wait on her came up and spoke. He liked the gentle eagerness with which she questioned her; he approved of the respect she evidently inspired, and he knew that he was thinking of Marian as his wife.

"The wind and tide are both our friends. Since you were at Portspadron, they have built a larger pier, big enough to benefit us. I shall land you in the little boat you see there, and Mrs. Cravèn will walk with you to the hotel."

Alfred Bellingsby talked to Marian at intervals, as he passed and repassed, taking a walk, and stopping for conversation.

"You saw Lord Plinborough?"

"No; he sent the message by Lady Florence. It was with her that everything was arranged."

"And you see by the note from your brother that he expected you. He knows you are here now."

"Knows!—how?"

"Our signal is up."

He pointed out the narrow flag, lengthened out upon the breeze. As the moon rose and spread upon the sea, a broad stripe of glittering light, its rays fell on Marian's uplifted face.

"Our first message to each other!" she said. "I am so glad that he knows I am here!"

"We agreed upon it. He has been looking out often—you may be sure of that. Have you got your luggage up? We will send that after you. Now step aside out of the way of the rope."

He was saying these small nothings, while his heart was praising her with unsaid words. "She has no chatter about her—no lover in her life, with plenty of the power of self-devotion, and no end of it to give away." If it all proved to be what he expected, would he not glory in such a woman when he could call her his own? He had already

settled the question of whether he could "talk to her." A devout-minded woman could understand, he thought. And still he went on thinking as he stood and watched Marian landing, and going up the cliff as if she had wings on her feet. Once she stopped and turned round; the moon was casting broad black shadows about her feet, and her head was in the light. She waved a handkerchief, and waved it again after she had seen him take off his hat. The next moment she was lost among the white-washed houses, and Alfred made up his mind that he would sleep in his yacht that night. "I'll see her at breakfast to-morrow," he thought.

There was no time lost by Marian on her way up the unaltered steep of Portspadron. She reached a platform; roads branched off on the right and left. On the right there was a white railing and a gate, a large pebble-paved courtyard, a well-known house with green painted windows, and a porch,

which was a bower of myrtle. She walked to the porch, and into the house; an apple-faced landlady met her, and said,

"Bless our dear hearts, 'tis Miss Harcourt! Oh! blessee, my dear!"

And so she took Marian into her motherly arms, and kissed her, leaving a tear on her forehead.

"I couldn't but kiss thee, my poor dear, as I have done a thousand times before when you were an infant baby in these arms. Didn't I nurse you for nine years? Don't I know more than we shall either of us ever tell?"

And so Marian was carried off upstairs, led by the hand, like a child, and told to walk softly and be gentle, as Mrs. Trethewry put her inside and closed the door immediately. There, in the strong light of the great full moon, was Herbert, the whole room mysterious with the white rays and the black shadows, and the silence of waiting. He was lying on a long low

couch, and looking out of the window.

"I am here," she said, in her gentle voice, on which the slightest touch of harshness had always sounded like such unnatural discord as to be remarked immediately—"here I am."

He turned on her a pale face, which looked quite luminous in the glare from the window.

"Thank you. It was like you to come so quickly. Marian,"—she saw his hungry eyes, that spoke of more gladness than his words expressed; and she bent over and kissed him tenderly—"Some one else is here," he said with a smile; and then Marian saw that a man had risen up from a seat at a writing-table, and that he was standing behind her. "They never leave me—he or dear old Amy."

Marian could not speak. The stranger, too, was for a moment dumb.

"Should you have known me? Did you not know that I was here?"

"I didn't know. Have you been long back?"

"No—a month or two. I was on a visit to Lady Glaucott. Do you never hear from her? You used to be such friends. I thought she would have told some of you."

"I never heard," said Marian.

Over the minds of these two persons—Charles Grandison and Marian—rivers of memory were pouring. Their natural selves were half drowned, and nearly speechless, in the unexpected overflow of that long-sealed fountain.

"It was the luckiest thing. He has been so good to me—it was so like old times," said Herbert, gaspingly, and holding out his hand to find Marian's again.

"You are not to depose me. I have a natural aptitude for nursing. I must help you—remember that, if you please."

"It is not good to let sick people lie in the moonlight," said Marian. "These early

Spring evenings are chilly. You have a fire here at night, haven't you?"

"Oh! light it, Charley. You have got the matches on that table. Marian, were you glad to come?"

"Glad to hear you were ill! How can you ask such a question?"

Herbert laughed a little husky laugh.

"But for your being ill, as the condition assigned by fate to my coming here, I should have liked it better than anything upon earth."

"Perran says he will get well; that Portspadron is better than Madeira; that he is not half as bad as people said he was; and that his medicines are to be peace and plenty, rest, pleasure, hope, and contentment—the last being an effect of good nursing with the above-mentioned appliances; and, in truth, only another name for perfect health."

"The cure takes too many things," said Herbert, letting Charley turn him away from

the window, and wheel him towards the table where the candles had been placed for lighting; "and those things are all terribly hard to get."

"I can't think so. Marian brings peace, Lady Glaucott sends plenty—she empties her larder here every other day; and I am going to set up a soup-kitchen on the things we are obliged to leave untouched. Mrs. Trethewry is rest; and I am pleasure. Perran brings hope at least once a day—cure and contentment follow, as a matter of course. Here's tea—I always make tea, Marian," says Charley Grandison. "There is a magnificent apartment prepared for you. This girl will show it to you."

So the tidy, white-aproned servant, who had brought in the kettle, curtseyed Marian out at the door, and introduced her to her chamber.

"It is like a resurrection," was Marian's reflection. "Here again! The dear old people—and Charley Grandison once more!

It is a resurrection! What are we going to do?"

Marian's heart was beating wildly. She was very glad to be alone for a short time. Charley Grandison was a person who had been systematically left out of her thoughts. Never since the day when she had last seen him, and heard him, and so misconstrued his meaning, had she ever had any message from him which might not have been sent to any other friend or old acquaintance. And she had loved him so well! It brought shame to her face to think of it. But she excused herself quickly.

"I was so young, such a happy girl, who had never had cause to doubt or fear anybody. I was so ignorant. I loved him. How absurd! I thought he would write and ask me to be his wife. I thought I should offer him all my faith and love, and wait with patience till we could enter on life together. Ridiculous! How much wiser I am at twenty-two than I was at

seventeen. What a woe I made for myself! If other and more certain griefs had not claimed me, how I might have broken my heart for Charley Grandison! It makes me laugh!" meditated Marian, bursting out crying nevertheless.

Then she dried her eyes, and smoothed her hair. She washed her face, and put the candle away, that she might look at the moon. She was tranquil now. Her thoughts were with Alfred Bellingsby. It was under another such moon as that which was gazing down from a cloudless sky, and flooding Portspadron with light, painting caricatures of houses and trees, rocks and railings, on the flat ground and the rising hill-side,—it was on just such nights as these that she last recollected the place, when she and Lady Glaucott had been watching the great catches of fish. In such days as followed such nights they had stood on the cliffs, they had watched the sun, they had seen Patty for the last time in life with her sketch-

book, absorbed in her work under the Black-rock's shelter. They had thus seen her last in life and first in death!

In such moonlight Charley had gone down the channel; for just such a night had followed on that dark day of the great fog. And now he had come back again. But Marian said she was wiser than she had been. She could trust Charley as man, soldier, and dear friend—just as he had meant her to trust him. But now, in her wisdom, and with the experience gained through her sister's marriage, she knew that when a man loved he acted very differently, and never left the question doubtful for an instant. She was quite convinced. She was honestly sure that—misled by her girlish romance—she had given to her friend's words an interpretation which he had never intended.

It did not affect her unpleasantly. She had quite outlived it. Only it had all happened, and all been imagined in that terrible

time which she could not think of without pain.

She was there again. So strangely sent for, in such fear and sadness. She could not help being nervous; "And that was why I cried," Marian says to herself, to whom she is excusing herself, and promising better things. Just as she was going down Mrs. Trethewry came up.

"Have you had hot water, and all you want? And you have heard of Sir Thomas? Sent away by the Government! Nobody like him! It was a sort of a trial to go, for he is mighty fond of my lady. And she is a dear tender heart, I can assure you. We all love her, and *that* we do! She came down, and was fine and glad to hear you were sent for. She said you'd be pretty company for her, if you could stop here a bit. And there's Mr. Bellingsby. He's wonderful! First along it seemed as if he'd never rejoice any more. But he's got over it. Got over it in a comfortable way,

you understand. But he keeps her grave beautiful, and is for ever spending money for her sake. There's a girls' school at Trevarna, where they are taught to work unbelievable fine things. And you might eat gold if you asked for it for Patty's sake!"

"And how is Mrs. Angerstein?"

"All over as she ever was," Mrs. Trethewry declares. "There is not the change of a hair in her since you saw her last, nor ever will be—that's my belief. She's an example; and once she got herself some grand clothes, and many of us saw them. They were made a sight of at Trevarna, and she was advised by my lady. Then she went up to Danesford Hall, and there Mr. Bellingsby and she kept open house; and Mrs. Garret Naylor was there, and her husband too, and I heard how they were both admired—you know she is a very fine-featured woman," says Mrs. Trethewry.

Marian says she always admired her, and she asks how long they stayed at Danesford.

"A matter of one month," said Mrs. Trethewry; "and then—believe me true—she came back, and put on her holland apron, and made the butter just the very same as if she'd gone and done all the finery in her sleep, and forgotten the whole story on her waking. That was after his first voyage, you know. He went to sea again after that. But now he has taken to his yacht, and that's better; he will be marrying, I hope, one day, and live in his house—every way preferable, as far as I can judge. You know Patty left Madam Angerstein all she had, and she made her will the very day she came of age.

CHAPTER X.

MEN.

Men that are safe and sure in all they do
Care not for trials they're put unto;
They meet the fire, the test, as martyrs would,
And though opinion stamp them not, are gold.
BEN JOHNSON.

IT is a great moment in any man's life when he has said of a woman that she would suit him as a wife. The importance of the moment was never felt by any man more honestly than by Alfred Bellingsby on board the yacht.

"Some women would not marry a man who had buried as much of his heart," argued Alfred. "Then, too," he went on, "*I* could not marry a woman who would

not love my mother; also, my mother must love *her*. But Marian Harcourt would suit me well, and she would marry me, *if she knew me*." Such was the somewhat bold nature of Mr. Bellingsby's meditations.

He did not believe that any woman, because she was poor and unmarried, would marry any man who was willing and rich. But he did believe that Marian could be overcome by honest devotion and a true-hearted admiration, firmly held to, and bravely told. He did not desire any madness of passion or folly of romance; but he thought a good woman might take him gladly, and love him well. Such a woman he should like to place at Danesford, and dower nobly, as he could.

"Many girls could not comprehend either myself or my feelings, and no blame to them either; but Marian, *if she only knew me*"—it was felt in the thorough honest-heartedness of this man, not in his vanity, that he could dare to be known—"if she

could just know me as I am, in my thoughts of the past, and my hope in the present, this woman would understand it all."

He could not possibly have paid any woman a greater compliment. He was ready to trust Marian with the solemn past, which had been so sorrowed over, and with the sacred, unknown future, which would be full of grief or gladness, whichever she might make it. He had made up his mind; he would try to make Marian his wife. He thought he had pretty well ascertained that she was not promised to any other man, for Herbert had freely spoken of his family to him, though he had not been very communicative about himself. He had never given a thought to Charley Grandison.

And yet that evening Marian had forgotten Alfred for Charley's sake. Before the hour for Herbert's being made comfortable for the night by their dear old Amy—more properly, Mrs. Trethewry—Marian had been sitting with him alone, listening to his

short-breathed talking, and taking care to make her answers to his questions as explicit and as little exciting as possible. He was talking of Teresa.

"So it was all sent back. How did my mother bear it?"

"Lizzie was there—that helped us. It was your being ill that my mother felt most about. Then Lady Florence came the next afternoon—she came when we were alone. The next morning Mr. Naylor brought Lizzie to comfort me; and he took my mother away with him. Lizzie and I were *miserably happy*, if you can understand that."

"What about?"

"About everything. We looked back into the past, which she had never before seen so clearly; and, even with your sorrow before us, even though Lizzie said that they had heard through Mr. Belville that her marriage was the cause of *all that*."

"It wasn't," said Herbert.

"Even though she believed what she had heard, we rejoiced that one of us was released from the heavy trial of—of——"

"Of what?"

"Poverty," said Marian, in a whisper, as if she were afraid of their own shadows against the wall flickering in the firelight.

"The truth came to me while I was lodging in London," said Herbert. "I have been very cold-hearted, selfish, inconsiderate. My repentance wore me; my failing health frightened me. I thanked Heaven that Frederick possessed the splendid character and cultivated genius he undoubtedly has——"

"She did not sell herself, you know. She admired him above all men; and it was her first experience of love. She chose him, too, for she could not be tempted away from him. Our mother is with Lizzie. I left therefore without anxiety on her account. My only anxiety is to get you strong."

"They talk of strain of mind, and shock

to the nervous system—Perran really speaks of recovery. But my prayer is, 'Let me earn my bread, or die.'"

"You will do more, and live."

"I can't recover it yet," said Herbert. "It had got to wear me terribly. I saw for some time that we must marry quickly, or part for ever. She chose her own way. But when I really thought I was dying, I told Lord Plinborough, who was like a brother to me—God bless him for it!" said Herbert, earnestly; "and I gave him the wedding-ring which I told him to take to her."

"And had he got that with him when he sent me your message?"

"Yes. I wonder he did not contrive to see you. He was so taken up with this place, and the people and neighbourhood. Lady Glaucott took quite a fancy to him. Alfred had to come ashore and see me, and walk with him. He was only here two days, but he did so much, it seems to me

like a week or a month. Then we made the plan about you, and he went to town, leaving Charley to take his place—Charley is a dear fellow!" Then wandering back, he said, "I wonder if Plinborough will see her, whether he will write, or come down again. It was never right for an hour after she found that that living was given away, and that she had so much money—no, not for an hour, I tell you," Herbert says, greatly excited. "She had made up her mind to live *there*. She would not break a single tie for me. She would have adopted me into her own life, but she had no strength of heart to make her leave her own home ties, and bind herself up with mine. I knew that, either way, I must be miserable. I believe that what came was the better choice. That sister of hers worships money. I saw her letters—they were sent to me as that poor girl's excuse."

Then, having talked his heart empty, as it seemed, for there could only have been the

same things to say in other words, and repeated griefs are slaying pleasures, he was silent for a time; but, after a short pause, he said,

"You can say what you please, Marian. I don't want you to be silent against your will. Let the old open-heartedness come back if it can."

"I have only one thing to say, Herbert. It is this. I have seen Mrs. Belville; and I think you *must* have died of *her*, and that you may recover from her sister."

"Oh!" and an odd smile crossed his face; and then he said, "It's pleasant to have Charley here. He is a dear fellow, isn't he?"

"He used always to be a favourite. I did not know he had come back from India."

"India!—no! He has been in Canada."

"He went to India five years ago," Marian says.

"And three years ago came back, chang-

ed into another regiment, and got sent to Canada."

"Did you know it?"

"Yes. He wrote to me very often. I used to send all of you messages from him," said Herbert, in a voice that betrayed some degree of vexation.

"Oh! I remember the messages," answered Marian.

"Of course; there were always messages."

Marian never spoke.

"He wanted to visit me. I went to Oxford, and he ran down to see me just for a day. It was on his way to Rosdew. He was there a couple of months, I think. He is stationed at Exeter now. They were ordered home."

Still Marian never spoke. A conflict of feeling, such as seldom happens in anyone's life, had shaken Marian's heart as she sat there, seemingly so calm and patient, in the changing light of the leaping fire. It was true that Marian had long ago buried her

dead love out of her sight, but now she was almost frightened at her own weakness making it so hard to send away even its memory into forgetfulness.

"The recollection would be degrading—the recollection of having so lived on the thought of a man who only felt friendship for me. That is, it would be degrading, but for my knowing how confiding I was, in my ignorance of life, in my worship of him—in my days of fearless innocence."

These things she was saying in her heart, scarcely listening to Herbert. But memory was hard to slay. She resolved, silently, "I will never think of it any more," but up rose a parting recollection of how this man had been like the light of her young life, how she had early grown to womanly strength and dignity under his watchfulness. More times than she could number, in the sunshine of the most perfect worldly prosperity, in the midst of the greatest imaginable happiness, this man had made her know

that he loved her. From the time when she had come home from school till the day he left them, but a short time before they had had, with pain and loss, to hide themselves in the wilderness of human life, in the obscurity of London, she had believed that he would marry her. And he had loved her only as one who loved all of them, and everything that seemed to mean more than that her own imagination had supplied.

So Marian told the story, and argued the case; and she pronounced herself guilty, of her own grief. Perhaps, as an ignorant boy, he really had loved her. She would give herself the benefit of that doubt. She would grant to herself the consolation of it. But, if so, he had quickly outlived his boyish passion, and left her to suffer her part in the great desolation, without help from him.

"I never told you before about seeing him at Oxford," said Herbert. "Where was the good of telling any of you? I think I judged well. There would have been

difficulties—I don't see how you could—Well, it's no use talking; Grandison, though not a rich man, has a place in the world——"

"I quite understand you. I am glad that he saw you; and glad that he wrote to you—he is part of the old life."

"Marian, I don't want to deceive you. He was very fond of you, when he was a boy. It was no use, you know."

"It belonged to the years before the flood, didn't it?" she said, smiling. "You don't stay up late, do you? You must not have a bad night because I have come."

"You are the best girl in the world, Marian. No one ever had so much downright strong sense."

Her heart was beating against her side. But even then she could be thankful that she had never betrayed herself.

"Charley was always rather a wilful fellow, and very excitable. If he had got into one of his wilful ways about you, it

would only have made everybody miserable. He is very much improved—and so good to me. He's a dear fellow. I wonder where he is?" And then he thought he would be helped to his room. "Amy comes up," he said. "You can ring the bell."

Charley had left the brother and sister together to make their first confidences, and he had gone out for his evening walk.

He stands on the cliff, and looks at the *Fairy* sleeping on the lazy waves. The crews of some fishing-boats are running down the steep paths, with their bags and bundles; they are going out for the night, and some of them speak to him as they go by.

"Come along, Cap'n. It won't be the first time."

"No. But I have land-work to-night."

"How's Mr Herbert?" They still spoke of him as if he were a boy.

"Better. Nobody dies here before his time, you know."

"He's of a good sort. Bless 'em all!"

"Amen," says Charley. "Keep some fish for me." And then when he is alone again, he thinks of Marian.

"She is not changed, only five years handsomer. I suppose Herbert was always right. It is never any use talking of what you can't do. But I find her at twenty-two even more than she promised to be—poor, almost forgotten,—unknown, rather; for she remained as a tradition, but was unknown as a fact. Lady Glaucott did not know where they lived—somewhere in London. It was only Herbert whom she knew about. He never seems to have lost sight of anybody. He is an excellent fellow!"

He walks up and down, turning round and round the same thoughts in his mind—that Herbert of course was right to say that there was no good to be got out of talking, that he wondered if he could do it *now*, and that she was the only woman

exactly to his mind that he had ever seen in his life.

But Charley was not of a *too* romantic turn. Though he wished to be married, he was not above wishing that his beloved one had been possessed of just a little money.

"Money goes so uncontrollably fast. A fellow *can't* look after it. A woman with just enough to keep her is about the safest speculation a man can make. And yet, as to Marian, I believe it would be, all ways, the very best thing I could do." And "Wouldn't it be fun?" inquires the faithful heart, which is set upon persuading both head and conscience that the cure for being always six months in debt is to marry a portionless woman.

Yet Charley was no spendthrift; and he had never ceased to love Marian. As he said, he might dare to offer himself to her now, for his own fortune, with his pay, made him just rich enough to marry.

"Any man might be proud of her; but to

marry *me*, she ought to be desperately in love. Herbert says that there are no lovers in the way—I got that out of him last night. That makes one feel easy; and it gives one time. It is a very comfortable thing, not to be hurried." And so Charley returns to the hotel, and is met by Mr. Trethewry.

Mr. Trethewry was waiting at the white gate of his clean courtyard, exchanging pleasant words with passers-by, and ready to receive Captain Grandison on his return, with the freedom of a privileged old friend.

"So she's come, sir. I haven't seen her; but my wife says it is fairly a blessing to look upon her. Your old sweetheart she was, Cap'n. Maybe you've forgotten. But you could speak your mind in those days, when she would have been a fair match for any man. But I don't know what they would have done without her when the trouble came thick. She had the head of a councillor, sir. Everybody said so. And she'll get her reward," he concludes, with

enthusiasm. "I hope to make my reverence to her to-morrow. But the sound of her voice was too much for me to-night. I could not have given her even the hour of the day,"—by which Mr. Trethewry meant good night or good evening—"without choking. I felt it so—believe me true, sir." And Mr. Trethewry finished by the small solemnity of a little bow.

"It must be pleasant to see their faces here again," says Charley.

"Yes; and if we could ever see them at the Groves! If Mr. Harcourt could marry an heiress, and buy back the place! My lady likes him vastly, and Sir Thomas would not deny it to him—there was some talk of such a thing. Did you ever hear, sir?"

"Oh! everybody talks. There is no lady in the case now, I can tell you on the first authority, for he told me."

"Hear that now!" exclaimed Mr. Trethewry; "and it was no less than Dr. Perran

who told me. He had heard it in a round-about way from a friend of his who had attended the supposed father-in-law in his last illness—by an accident, if I remember right. That was the way in which it came down to these parts. But I never heard a sound of it from anyone else."

Charley Grandison walked into the house. A bird of the air had told the matter. He was Harcourt's particular friend, yet he had known nothing of it. "I am glad the doctor knows—it may help him in the case," he thought within himself as he went upstairs to the sitting-room. The bow-window, without curtains drawn or blinds down, looked chilly, and the fire was burning too low to give the needful light. Charles Grandison groped his way in, and got a piece of wood from the store in the corner. He proceeded carefully to arrange the fire, slowly making an opening for the air, and carefully placing the wood on the top. While stooping over his work, the door

opened, and the room was flooded with light.

"Is that you, Amy?"

"No. I have brought the candles in."

"Oh! Marian," and he went up to her; and then they drew curtains, arranged tables and chairs, and together reduced the room to order. "It's just the light we used to use for blind-man's buff, when we were children; and that fairy mortal, Lizzie, could never be caught. Do you forget the old times?"

He had drawn a chair near the fire, and they had sat down together.

"I never forget anything, I believe. I have a terribly good memory."

"It's a great blessing."

"Not if there be little worth remembering, and much that would be best forgotten."

"Should you have known me again, Marian?"

"Oh! yes. What is five years in the life of a man such as you? You are bigger —you have more hair on your face; but no

real change has happened—no change that I can see."

"No change at all. I am the same every way."

She never spoke.

Out on the cliff he had been congratulating himself that there was no hurry, that there was plenty of time; but when he looked at Marian's slender form, and pure, sweet, quiet face, he thought so much beauty would be sure to vanquish all who saw it. So being a very impulsive person, he said, with remarkable ardour,

"There is no change on my side. Will you always remember that, Marian?"

"Don't be so impetuous."

"You are scolding me, just as you used to do. Let it be as it then was."

"When you were my humble servant?—No, your apprenticeship is over. Such service would be child's play now. But you are the dear old original Charley Grandison, and I feel very glad to see you." She rose

and gave him her hand. "I am going—good night." And she went smiling out of the room.

It had been with a great effort of strength that, long ago, she had put away the thought of this man. To see him again—to hear him speaking in this way—was like giving girlhood back to her. She took it merrily now, as a woman might look on the toys of her childhood. She had almost accused Herbert of double-dealing towards her; but now, seeing and hearing Charley, she made amends to Herbert in her heart. "He is a happy-hearted, in-love-with-all-of-us sort of creature. How pleasant to see him!" Her judgment was satisfied, and she turned her thoughts to Rosdew, Angersteins, and Mr. Bellingsby.

CHAPTER XI.

LIFE ONCE MORE.

The strange music of the waves
Beating on those hollow caves,
Let my life no longer be
Than I am in love with thee.

GEORGE WITHER.

MR. BELLINGSBY, true to his word, appeared at Marian's breakfast-table. Herbert never left his room till after he had had that meal, and Charles Grandison had gone to Lady Glaucott. He generally went to her the first thing in the morning, always breakfasting at Rosdew.

Marian, refreshed, comforted, and amused, was just in the best possible humour for welcoming her guest. She had so much to

say of thanks and gladness, of the success of the voyage, of the consolation it was to be with her brother.

"Events follow each other very quickly," said Alfred. "I have just had a letter from Lord Plinborough. Can you guess at its contents?"

"I heard he was going to be married." Then, feeling how desperate was this sudden emergency, she said, "I must ask you not to say anything of this marriage before Herbert. He does not know—he *must not* know—not yet, at least."

"Married!" exclaimed Mr. Bellingsby—"you know more than I do. He is gone—actually, by this time, he has started—gone to the Holy Land. Did you ever hear of such a man? But, Miss Harcourt, tell me about this proposed marriage. It must have had something to do with his going. He says nothing more than this—that I am to say to your brother that he did what he wished; and then comes the information of

his having arranged everything to leave England immediately. I am very sorry. Won't you tell me what you know?"

But Marian was covered with confusion, and she hesitated painfully.

"I have no right to meddle in other people's matters," she said. "I was imprudent in saying what I did."

Mr. Bellingsby liked her confusion, and approved of her hesitation. "She is no gossip," he said in his heart. "Half the women in the world would have been glad of an excuse for telling all they knew, and all they were entitled to guess, of some other woman who had behaved ill." So he sat looking at her with a sense of satisfaction, making him very comfortable.

"I hope you are not very tired; and tell me what you think of your brother. Have you seen Dr. Perran?"

Marian was obliged to him for ceasing to talk of a matter about which she felt that she ought to be silent. But she was pre-

vented from speaking of Herbert by the entrance of Dr. Perran himself. He came forward with a very glad smile on a fine open face, distinguished by that perfection of freshness to which common mortals never reach, no matter how much they may cultivate the beauty of cleanliness. His eyes were kind and bright, his voice innocent of the smallest suspicion of huskiness, his step the most free and elastic. When Marian had last seen him, he had been attending her father; now, as then, all the country around Portspadron loved and believed in him. He had earned the world's admiration, and wore his honours with good-humoured gratitude.

"Do you recollect me?" he asked.

"Oh, yes. How do you do, and how is your mother? She might not know me again, but I perfectly remember her."

"She is coming to see you. It has given her great pleasure to think of meeting you.

You are less altered than might have been expected."

And Marian felt that his wise eyes were reading and calculating the effect of her life on the lines of her face, and that he was balancing in his mind what she was, with what she might have been.

He was satisfied, however, with a short consideration of such things, for he sat down at the breakfast-table, and, after a few pleasant words with Alfred, he asked Marian if she had seen her brother that morning, and what Mrs. Trethewry reported of his state during the night. The answer seemed satisfactory, for, after a short silence, he said,

"If I could know more of the cause, I could calculate more easily the danger that surrounds the effect. There has been some great exciting cause. A love-story, I hear. He is a strong-hearted, ardent man. If he has suffered any unexpected cruelty—if it came at a time when his strength had been shattered by some previous blow—can you

tell me, Miss Harcourt? I only ask you what I would ask of himself, if I were not afraid of the effects of the agitation which might possibly ensue. I heard from my relative and friend, Dr. Broughton, whom your sister called in to attend Mr. Mawley some time since, that Herbert looked very ill, and that he had then understood that he was engaged to marry that Mr. Mawley's daughter, who became an heiress on her father's death. Is he engaged to her now?"

"No," said Marian.

"We may attribute a good deal to that, and to the shock and disappointment of finding himself without occupation in the world. He has said as much to me. I shall not be wrong in taking into consideration these things in my judgment of his case?"

"You will be right to do so, I am sure."

"Then I think he *may* recover—*will* recover. He had been out of health before. We will take the best view of the case. He

is happy among the scenes of his boyhood, he cannot be in a better place. Can you stay here with him?"

"Yes, I think so."

"And travel a little with him by-and-by?"

"Yes; if necessary."

"In the yacht," suggested Alfred.

"The very best possible treatment," said Dr. Perran. "When the Winter comes he should be got abroad. He will be strong by that time, if he can get rest and peace now. Somebody should get him a chaplaincy in the south of Europe. Think of that for him—*do*."

"Perhaps I can help you there," said Mr. Bellingsby. Marian gave him a look which he accepted as a gift to be laid by and treasured carefully. "I know I can be useful there. His going for four months to the south can be easily arranged, I assure you."

"Then we may concentrate our forces on the present, and leave the future to you," said Dr. Perran. "I will go now and see him."

"I ought to thank you," said Marian, when she was left alone with Alfred.

"Remember me, and my promise—trust me. I ask no other thanks."

"I could very easily trust you," said Marian; "but I could not as easily tell you how glad you have made me."

"And I know all about Plinborough—don't I? It was strange if Harcourt chose him to be his envoy to Miss Mawley, if he were going to marry her himself."

"It was very strange," said Marian.

"Speaking generally, men and women are all born to be married. It is the great business of life. I have always thought so. You do, I hope?"

"Subject to higher considerations—yes."

And Marian thought of Charles Grandison, and his conversation the night before. It looked so odd, as she recollected the scene, that she laughed.

"I can bear to be laughed at," said Alfred.

"Oh! but I feel as if I should never laugh at *you!*"

"I never used to laugh at you when you were one of Mr. Angerstein's boys, as people called my brother Charley and you."

Captain Grandison at this moment walked in, bringing the scent of sea-breezes with him

"Such a glorious day!" Then after the usual welcomes and inquiries, he said, "She can't come, and she is quite unhappy about it. She is muffled up by the fire with a horrid cold. Fancy anybody having a cold on such a day as this! I am very glad I did not go out to the yacht. I thought of doing it once, but I felt it more proper to get rid of Lady Glaucott's message first. She likes to consider me in the light of a faithful servant."

"But we have not had the message," said Marian.

"I forgot. I beg your pardon. Be sure you consent, Marian." (Alfred a little envied

this young man having the right to call his most perfect lady by her Christian name.) "Mind you consent, because it will give me a charming walk with you in the afternoon, and we can go to some of our old haunts; round by the Chestnut Grove, for instance."

"But I have not had Lady Glaucott's message," says Marian.

"I hope you are not grown impatient."

Charley sits down rather close to Marian, who says,

"Have you had your breakfast?"

"It was so long ago!" says Charlie, despondingly.

"Then let us ask if Mrs. Trethewry has any more coffee."

"When you are not here I keep breakfast going till luncheon. It is so pleasant for anybody who may drop in. Oh! and that reminds me that Lady Glaucott will send the pony-carriage. It's the very identical old Fanny," says Charley, with delight —"the very same poor dear old thing that

you had your first lesson in driving with. And she was so lazy then that I remember your rating me for bestowing on her no more than just the most absolutely necessary reminders."

"No; you used to emphasize your opinions upon her. I remember it very well."

"Do you? Well, the pony-carriage will be here at half-past one, for you to lunch at Rosdew at two. Lady Glaucott advises rest and peace for Herbert to-day; and she says I am to be with her at half-past five, to walk home with you. I said you would prefer walking one way. I suppose I was right?"

"I shall walk there, to be in time to prevent her sending the carriage; and I will use my old friend, Fanny, to bring me home."

"But I settled it," said Charley.

"That does not matter; I shall start in time."

"But I shall not be here in the middle of the day."

"That is quite right. You know that I do not want to be guided to Lady Glaucott's."

"That is, you don't want me?"

Charley was certainly of a rather impetuous spirit, and he showed unmistakeable vexation at having the plan altered which he had made. Alfred was silent, but observant; and Marian was, as he thought, angelically patient. When Charley said "You don't want me," she answered,

"I don't want anybody;" and she got up and rang the bell.

Charley walked to the great bow-window at the end of the room, and looked out on the sea; and Mr. Bellingsby felt it to be a proper time to say that the roof of Westminster Hall was of chestnut, which had been, formerly, much grown in this country.

The return of Dr. Perran, with, on the whole, a good account of Herbert, occupied everyone's attention for a few minutes.

"His pulse is quick, though no quicker

than might be expected after the excitement of your arrival. He had better be kept perfectly quiet to-day. He is inclined to sleep. He wants to see Mr. Bellingsby after he has been up an hour—about three o'clock this afternoon. Can you promise him that?"

"Yes, willingly."

Then, after a little more talk on the arrangements of the day, the three gentlemen walked away together, leaving Marian alone. She had to unpack her portmanteau, arrange a writing-table, and send letters to her mother and Lady Florence, and a note to good Mrs. Grigshaw. When she came back to the empty room, having ascertained, through the beloved old Amy, that her brother was asleep, she looked down its well-remembered length, and through the bow-window to the glorious blue level of the sea, that lay there so tranquilly, catching the sun's brightness, and reflecting in unbroken shadows the dark fleet of fishing-boats which lay waiting

upon its breast. Large vessels were in the offing, making easy way with their white sails, soft, like the wings of a bird, in the tender distance; and there lay the *Fairy*, like a well-dressed lady, enjoying herself in the sun.

These sights, or such as these, had been, as Marian knew, every day renewed during the past years, and she looked at them with friendly eyes. And yet how strange it was that she should be there, in the "bow-windowed, upper parlour" of that house! She knew the room well. She had always known it. It had been the rendezvous for pic-nic parties. It had been the place where they had had luncheon or tea when her father had taken strangers in their boat to visit the caverns in the cliffs, or to be anchored off the Black-rock for line-fishing through a Summer afternoon. But now Marian looked round on the blue and white panelled walls, and on the old looking-glass over the fire-place, fastened into the wall

with a frame of foliage in grey stucco, and thought it marvellous that a few days should have placed her there, like the mistress of it all, with Trowberry Terrace in a world of the past, which had already, in the brightness of the sea and sky, and the freshness of the bounteous earth, begun to look dim, and strange, and far-away.

She wrote her letters by the open window, stopping, wondering, admiring, loving, and growing young sensibly. She laughed at, and with, herself; she determined to enjoy it while she could: wisely to get strength and spirit out of it. And as to the London life, if they had Herbert among them, he would only be in Lizzie's place till he was strong enough to go out in the world once more and labour in his calling, and there could be no hardship with hope of all good things for him.

As she proceeded with her writing slowly, having little to say, or very little that she intended to say, and much

time to say it in, she revelled in her lonely freedom, her time for thought, her resting enjoyment of the fresh free air, and view of the boundless ocean. All sense of tediousness in the present, all fears for the future, all vexations as to the past, were dropping away from her, and leaving her unshackled and at liberty.

Like one who has been imprisoned, and has carried fetters on his limbs, and gone to their daily task chained and bound—like such a one set free, this woman felt, breathing the air from off the vast ocean before her, which she listened to heaving slowly, and coming up on the sands with faintly-heard lazy sighs, as she wrote to her friends in common words, saying that the doctor gave great hope of Herbert recovering with time and good nursing, and that Charles Grandison was nice, and that Mr. Bellingsby had been very good to her. It was delightful to be cared for by dear old Amy, whose husband could not be respectful

enough; that she should lunch with Lady Glaucott, and would write again very soon.

Then, in a little note enclosed to Lizzie:—

"In an hour I shall have seen the Groves, and walked through Rocky Lane to beautiful Rosdew, where the old hawthorns grow, and the banks are full of daffodils—I am going to pick daffodils to-day. I can't be so old, Lizzie—it must be all a mistake. What, two and twenty and nearly six months! Something has happened to me since I have been here. Do you know that I have lived in Trowberry Terrace, night and day, Summer and Winter, for five years, and that the life became so *mine*—as if I had been made by enchantment out of a wooden door or chimney-pot—that I never imagined anything for myself—only for *you*. Such strange hours have passed since I said 'Good-bye.' Is it a year ago? There is no time here—it is the old all-right, never-mind, let-alone life of the village fishermen.

Herbert can't help getting well; and I could not be anxious if I tried."

And so she finished her work, and after half an hour with Herbert at his early dinner, she took her letters and went into the village, to post them on her way, to lunch with Lady Glaucott.

CHAPTER XII.

PEACE.

The end and the reward of toil is rest;
Be all my prayer for virtue and for peace.

BEATTIE.

IN the luxury of solitude—which still was not solitude, for every stick and stone, every flower and fern, was a friend—Marian, turning her back on the village and the sea, walked slowly up the gently-rising ground till she came to an open green, where geese were cackling in jealous clamour over their young broods, and where old Peggy's poultry-farm was just visible behind the green elms.

She stopped in the midst of this noisy solitude, and before her rose the fir-trees,

and the great length of the chestnut wood, where the hyacinths grew; and above them, but a little way to the left, she could see the gables of Rosdew. She stopped and gazed. She could have knelt down and wept her heart out. She looked round, and saw she was alone; for one moment she thought that she really would. But what she really did was to turn quickly to her right across the short turf, which was fragrant with the crushed camomile under her feet, and go to a door, painted dark green, in a high wall, that enclosed rich masses of evergreen; arbutus and Portugal laurel. A drooping birch hung over the wall, and a great cedar flung its huge dark feathery branches above the door.

Marian tried the door carefully. In her father's life-time it had been always locked. It opened readily now. She stopped, and closed it after her carefully, as it had formerly been her duty to do, and she stood still once more. She was standing on a

wide path, with a narrow border of common flowers on each side, and said—"They have very much grown in these years, or my ideas have become stunted."

Now she walked on boldly for a short way, and then she was on the carriage drive, the house to the right, the entrance-gate on her left. It was the Groves. Not a creature was in sight; not a sound of life was to be heard; everything looked in order and perfectly neat.

She felt choked by one great heavy, involuntary sigh, and then she turned away. She had seen the gable-ended granite house basking in the sunlight. The glittering gravel, from the mines near by, was exactly as it had been; the sloping grass went down with a steep descent to the clear, fast-flowing stream, from which rose the great bank of the Ridge. The grass was close-shaved on the terrace before the house, and sheep fed below, as it had ever been. The great silver fir and the two

glorious beech-trees were flinging their shadows as in old times. If there was any difference, it was that they had grown grander and nobler. By the entrance-gate the purple beech stood in its glory, mixing its foliage with the branches of a pear-tree just in bud. The thorns were not in blossom yet, but there they stood; and the honeysuckle wreaths were hanging in the branches of an apple-tree, full of green gem-like leaves.

Was there anyone near that home of memory but herself? She stood, looked, and listened. No peace could be greater. She turned her eyes on the house, which showed the perfection of a gently time-worn beauty, with its plainly-worked granite mullions, with the arms and interlacing initials of two Harcourts, who had married together, in 1662, over a projecting window in the gable that was nearest to her. The shadows which the projections made lay still on the grey walls, and a history, the

pains and intricacies of which it seemed to her that only her own heart knew, appeared to be living in that silence, and to acknowledge her there.

The thought came to her with a nervous thrill. She turned round, went back to the green door, took care that it was fastened properly, and moved rapidly on to that corner of the green where Rocky Lane would take her straight up by the last of the chestnuts to her friend's house. She plucked the daffodils, which had nearly finished their flowering; she examined the young ferns, which in their old variety were making the way so richly green; she stood still, entranced, in the presence of a bank, starred all over with primroses, and just as she reached the head of the lane some one said,

"You are later than you intended to be." It was Mr. Bellingsby.

"My curiosity was roused to examine the chestnuts."

He was walking by her side. "They are old and fine. I have chestnuts at Danesford, but they are nothing like these. I have seen the Groves, too, this morning. It is a most perfect place."

"I can't speak," murmured Marian. "I have been there. It is not that I feel much, but I can't talk."

He looked at her. "Some other day," he said, with an easy gentleness that seemed to do her good. "This is your way to the house, I suppose?"

He held open the gate; she looked at him to say "Thank you," but she was silenced by something in his face that she *felt* without reading it clearly—she felt that he was kind and good, most gentle and merciful.

"Oh, thank you!" It was of what she knew him to be that she spoke, not of what he was doing—holding a gate open.

"I shall call to see your brother to-morrow; then I sail for the Scilly Islands."

"How pleasant!" She tried to be as she had always been, but something had shaken her. "It must be seeing the Groves. I will get acquainted with the steward, and go inside the house, and become accustomed to it," she thought, as she went on to the door.

It was a substantial, long, low, straight-fronted house, and a climbing plant, with crimson blossoms, hung in masses from the wall within reach of Marian's hand, as she stood at the entrance waiting.

"Am I late? Oh! Giles, how do you do? Are there any more here whom I know?"

"Thankee, Miss Harcourt. You seem charming, miss; and we hope your brother will be brave again before long. Well, there's three of us now, you must remember; any way, they mind you. There's James under me, and Anna the head housemaid; but she has come to spectacles. My lady is upstairs to-day. No, Miss Harcourt, you are

not late, the message came from Mrs. Trethewry that you would rather walk, and so we expected you to take your time."

By this time Mr. Giles had conducted Marian up the well-remembered staircase, and ushered her into Lady Glaucott's presence. The lady was sitting wrapped up in the finest and softest of white India shawls, and Marian, saying "Don't get up," stooped over and kissed her. To look at, she was as pale as ivory, and a fine, delicate-featured woman. Her hair was like that of one who was slightly powdered. It was thick and beautiful, and always gracefully arranged, with a little cap that was invariably becoming. Her sweet voice, placid countenance, quiet smile, and naturally flattering manner were just the things that would have made her a popular woman of the world. But she had never found any place in what is called the world. From twelve years old by three sick-beds in succession she had found a place, and patiently

taken it. When on the death of the last she was left the mistress of a fine place, and the possessor of a large fortune, she was also without a relative in the world.

Sir Thomas Glaucott had been the executor of her mother's will. His first wife, Mrs. Grandison, had been that mother's cousin. Miss Randolph knew Sir Thomas better than any other man in the world. So when he asked her to be his wife, she married him.

CHAPTER XIII.

CONVERSATION.

> And much inquired she of her health and weal,
> And much rejoiced for her unhoped return.
>
> GAY.

DURING Sir Thomas's absence, Lady Glaucott preferred staying at Rosdew. He would not be very long away, and Rosdew was small by comparison with the Towers, and not beyond a woman's management. All her pleasantest social experiences belonged to Portspadron. She loved the place and the people; she loved the easily-managed garden, the abundant flowers, the willing fruit. "I like all things but troublesome things. If things require trou-

ble I have done with them. I have had trouble enough. I am not going to grow them for my own use, I can tell you. I might trouble for six months in the year at the Towers, and never produce anything so beautiful as the primrose bank in Rocky Lane."

And now, even in the midst of that most trying of human every-day ills, a severe cold, this gentle lady, with her fair face, her white shawl, snowy cap, and powdered hair, was delightful to look at. "You look like a lovely, soft, silky-furred, delicious white cat," said Marian; "I want to nestle up to you. It must be quite comfortable to have a cold like yours."

"And, putting aside Herbert's illness, I suppose you like coming here."

"Yes, very much," said Marian quickly.

"I never go to London. I think I was there seven years ago, and perhaps I may never go again. It is too big," said Lady Glaucott, with a tone of despair in her voice.

"And I suppose you live in one of those new places which are being built for ever and ever—quite modern and smart, with a bath-room and a conservatory, and all those things which are among the necessaries of life now?"

"No, not quite that," said Marian. "But what matters anything away from here?" Then, in a low voice, with bright tears in her eyes, "I loitered by the way; I looked in at the Groves."

"My dear!" Lady Glaucott took Marian's hand in hers. "I was wondering whether you would like me to take you there. It must have been a sad sight for you. I grew very fond of your excellent father;" and Lady Glaucott wiped away the tears which were rolling down her white face, as she fixed asking eyes on Marian.

"Yes, I should like to go there very much with you. Herbert has often seen it, I think?"

"He has been in the habit of seeing the

place. We have often had him here for short visits, you know. We occasionally write to each other. It began in some business matters that required his signature when we were buying things, and, having begun the custom, we never gave it up. He wrote to me when he was first engaged to Miss Mawley. From him I have always heard of your mother and of you. Lizzie is comfortably married, I find."

"Very happily married," said Marian.

"Now explain this about Miss Mawley. Her uncle was made Lord Mawley; then his brother married a great heiress—I remember it all," said Lady Glaucott. But Marian never spoke. "Can't you tell me?"

"No, I can't. When she had the money she dismissed the man."

"It could scarcely have been said shorter. Is it all you know?"

"All that there is to know, as to the fact. As to ins and outs, I can't tell anything of them."

"Better not. Will it ever come on again?"

"Oh, no—quite impossible."

"Then we will let that go. How is your mother?"

Marian talked of Mrs. Harcourt.

"She had," said Lady Glaucott, "a way of *not* feeling things, without being *un*feeling. That is not a common character, and it is not an interesting character; but people cannot help that."

"I think that some one *must* feel; in every case there must be one to suffer, if there is any cause for suffering."

"I suspect that you did that, my poor child. But, in a certain way, your mother took the part of her brother against her husband. She was unforgiving because he had trusted him. She attributed the man's moral ruin to his temptation. 'The power to do ill deeds makes ill deeds done,'—that feeling oppressed her."

"It always has," said Marian, "and it

has made a silence in our lives on that subject; we never mention the past. My mother never spoke to Lizzie on the subject of our great loss; Lizzie knew scarcely anything till I told her myself, just before coming away."

"Poor child!" said Lady Glaucott again; "you have had, then, to suffer alone. But what we are called to is never bad for us."

"Oh, thank you!" cried Marian. "Anyhow, I can talk without bitterness now."

"And you have had the blessing of easy circumstances. We bought the Groves to secure that, as Herbert said it would, or hoped it would. I told him that, any time in my lifetime, he should buy it back. Sir Thomas made me buy it. I have never allowed a tree to be cut down, and I put the steward there, that I might have power over the tenant. I have wandered there with your memory in my heart many a day, in the places where we have been as friends in your father's time. Dear Sir Thomas

loved him, you know. He used to talk of all you children playing on the grass; for he had taken to his first wife's child as if he had been his son; *you* can remember that."

"Everybody loved Charley. It is delightful to see him again," said Marian.

It was a common-place remark to make, and it was listlessly said. Lady Glaucott's hand closed on Marian's fingers with a tender, sympathizing pressure; so slight an act was enough to make her tremble. Those words, "easy circumstances," were ringing through her brain. Could Herbert have been so thoughtlessly forgetful as to say that? It came strongly upon her that it would do her so much good to tell all; that it would be like flinging off a load from her heart; that to do it, though only once, and in desperation, would be an eternal ease. She would say—

"We were three of us, and a servant-girl; we paid forty pounds a year for enough of another person's house to live in; we had

our own furniture—of course things wore out, or had to be mended—once we had a new carpet, because the second-hand one we had bought when we first went there was in holes. We four had less than thirty-six pounds a year each for food, clothing, wages, washing—of course we could not afford ever to be ill. One hundred and eighty pounds a year was all we had. When Herbert came to see us we got him a pint of wine. Did he ever say we were in easy circumstances? Why, it breaks my heart. We should have been better off in one of the poor people's white cottages, on the cliff at Portspadron, but for his sake we made a great struggle, and lived there. How was it that he never understood?"

She went over all this rapidly in her heart, feeling it would be a gratification beyond all precedent to say it out loud to Lady Glaucott, to anybody, to the whole earth; but she was silent. She bowed her head meekly, and the strong storm of her feelings

went by, and left her life unstained. She had won another victory, denied herself once more. Nay, more, she had begged pardon in her soul for this tempest of self-love, stirred up by her rash judgment of her brother.

But some people have a gift of understanding, and Lady Glaucott was one of those.

"Herbert is like your father," she said. "You were very fond of your father!"

Silently Marian, by a little gesture, showed that she accepted that statement as an absolute truth.

"He is very like him. They are of those people who are worshipped in their own private circle, whose sympathies are bounded, and who are all the more loved, where they are loved, on that account. Beyond that life of daily personal interest they know nothing, they care for nothing. To the general world they are well-mannered individuals, people to know, but nothing

more. A credulous world believes in them, and asks them to dinner. Polite conversation is all that the world gets out of them. They are deaf and blind to all sounds and sights that are outside their own lives. And yet they are full of wisdom and learning, and not worshippers of self—for there is a self-concentration which is not selfishness, you know."

Marian listened.

"Yes, it is all very true," she said.

"That kind of thing made your dear father a bad man of business. He was old. So he sank under the disasters that came through his neglect and self-indulgence, and died. Herbert has, in the same way, sunk under the calamity that burst upon him. His own life, to which he was devoted, and which he adorned, was made empty, and he had so little power of recovery in him. He is young, and he will not die. I know him well, Marian. After this he will be a better

man. Those who have suffered, and only those, ever sympathise."

"Only those?" said Marian.

"Yes. Other people are only compassionate. If I read you rightly, you never wanted compassion from Herbert."

"Never," she said. "We even disguised facts, to save him from the necessity for bestowing it."

"He will marry one day. A good, worshipping wife, who wants no more than he, and he alone, can give, will make him a happy man. He is sure to recover his position, because he is a man to be admired; and all the admiration of the world would not hurt him."

Then they spoke of the Summer, and what he would do in it; of Mrs. Harcourt, and how Lizzie was taking care of her.

"When the Winter comes, manage to give me a six weeks' visit at the Towers," said Lady Glaucott. "I should like to show you the place, though it does not suit me as this

does. This is snug, and I have been adopted by the people. They have taken great pains with me, and had wonderful patience," she said, laughing.

"Oh! they love you dearly."

"I am something like what they lost when the Spadrons passed away—that is it," she said.

They returned more than once to the Winter visit to the Towers; they spoke of Herbert taking a voyage in Mr. Bellingsby's yacht.

"Let them go to the Mediterranean. The *Fairy* has been there, I know. Let them take Dr. Perran, who deserves a holiday, and can afford to take it, because the rich are never sick, and the poor have no illnesses except mine accidents, which are attended to by his partner, and paid for through a club. He can visit the 'health resorts,' as they are called, of the coast, and write a book for us all to read when he comes home. Herbert will fix on his

Winter's harbourage, and they can leave him there. Your sister can take possession of your mother, and you can come to me. Should you like it, my dear ?"

"Beyond words," said Marian.

"I am hospitable up there," said Lady Glaucott; "and the house gets filled with people. I may do unsurpassed wonders with your young life to help me. Mention it when next you write to Mrs. Harcourt, for it will certainly come to pass."

Marian was driven back, as had been arranged in the morning. She would not take the carriage down the rough road, called in the village the street; but, just by the houses which were straggling up the hill, she got out to walk to the hotel. As she entered the court, she saw Charley Grandison; he came forward.

"So you have got back. And Alfred saw you safe inside Lady Glaucott's gate."

"He was found where you sent him. And he opened the gate because he

stood before the latch," said Marian.

"I did not tell him to be at the chestnuts at the exact moment which was suited to that act."

"Nor did I," said Marian. "Let me go on."

"Oh! certainly. He opened the gate, and they both passed through. "A very little more, and I should hate that fellow," said Charley.

"A little more!—a little more of what?"

"Of dancing attendance on you."

"How can you be so ridiculous?"

"Now, Marian, you know——"

"No, I know nothing. You shall not be troublesome. And pray study Mr. Bellingsby a little more. He is so much more pleasant than——"

"Than I am. Don't be scrupulous, speak it out."

"Than men who are younger and who are greater self-seekers. I like him very much."

"If a man with his means is unmarried, he is a nuisance," said Charley.

Marian laughed aloud.

"Men are so intolerant," she said.

"And a man with such a heap of gold to fill his pockets from, is so unbearably unconscious. I look at the fellow, and I am quite sure he does not know whether he has ten or twenty sovereigns in his purse, and does not care either—it's detestable!"

"Why should he care? As long as money is not kept in a purse for ever, as old Diggory hoarded his wealth in a stocking, it must be doing good. It is no matter who circulates it—he or you. I can't understand confounding a man with his money. Enough is riches; if more than enough hurts a man by making him a sinner, or an idiot, I should understand his being, by reason of his money, detestable; but not otherwise."

"Come, now, don't be clever," said Charley. "Of course, I hate to see another possess what only I can use to the best purpose."

Marian was very grave. She looked up in Charley's face with that calm look which he had never liked, because it put him on trial, and subdued him, and which Mr. Bellingsby delighted in, because he felt he could welcome its scrutiny, and fairly ask for a return of the trust that he could fearlessly bestow.

"Oh! don't be angry," said Grandison. "Make some allowance for a poor hungry fellow, who has been serving his country, and forced away from all he loved. And *you* loved *me* in the old days. You loved me, Marian, as well as you knew how, child-like as you were. We were like two doves together in those days."

He looked at her with an odd sort of piteous tenderness.

"Like a dove," she said, again looking up in his face with that sweet, still, penetrating look of hers. "Ah! Charley, it was before the Deluge, as we call that time,—for that dove there was no ark."

She walked quickly away from him, and up to the sitting-room to Herbert. There was plenty to say to him, and he heard cheerfully. He was evidently better.

Grandison walked up and down in the court impatiently.

"The truth is, I should have insisted on seeing her that time when I came home. I can't think how I could have let any man so over-advise me. I was, I suppose, what people call *prudent*," meditated Charley; "and it's my firm belief that that sort of thing never pays."

Charley had a dogged, faithful, loving nature, and he spoke the truth when he said that he had never ceased to love Marian. He was extraordinarily impetuous in all circumstances where it was possible to go into immediate action. He could act in an instant; doing those daring things that only success could ever excuse. His was a word-and-a-blow nature. In cases where he could dare and do, he was brave; but

a case which required patient waiting subdued him. To him, everything seemed to be impossible that he could not achieve at once. And so he had, in truth, given Marian up—because she could not be immediately captured and carried away. When Herbert's words and his own reflexions had made this clear, he made no attempt to see her. But he never ceased to love her; she undoubtedly had kept all other women out of his life. But now that accident had brought them together, he was ready to begin where he had left off, as if there had been no separation. But this Marian could not do. She had no quarrel with him. He was her dear old companion and playfellow, but he was no more. She was of a nature that could not be won unsought. In such a matter she could not take anything for granted. Her love had died of starvation; it was absurd to treat it as a thing that could hear and feel! Nevertheless, she had no idea of letting this man pass out of

her life, for she liked the sight of his pleasant face, and the sound of his voice was cheerful music in her ears. They had gone two different ways, and trial had changed her so far as to free her from the danger of being taken captive by every-day things. His hourly pleasantness she liked as she liked earth, air, and sky; but she could not now fall in love with him. He had himself taught her the fatal knowledge that she could do without him!

CHAPTER XIV.

DEPARTURES.

We look before and after,
And pine for what is not;
Our sincerest laughter
With some pain is fraught.

SHELLEY.

"GOOD-BYE, Miss Harcourt."

"Oh! are you going?"

Marian was answering Alfred, and she felt very sorry to part with him.

"I have been here several days now," he said; "several days longer than I intended to stay at first."

"But you have nothing to do!"

The simplicity with which Marian said this amused him. He held her hand, laughing

as he looked down on a face that had become most beautiful in his sight, and very dear.

"You are mistaken. I have a great work in hand, and I am doing it with all my might."

"Oh! I beg your pardon. A yacht is such an idle sort of thing. How much Herbert enjoyed his sail yesterday! I believe I want to put everyone under contribution. I am too much absorbed by my interest in Herbert to give any thought to the lives of other people. But I wanted you—or, at least, I wanted the yacht. Fair weather has come in with the moon, Mr. Trethewry says, and he so enjoyed his sail!"

"I am going to London. I shall send back the yacht from Plymouth. I shall be away a fortnight. The *Fairy* is better here than anywhere else, and I shall put my men under Harcourt's orders. He is quite an amateur sailor, and the crew respect him accordingly. Dr. Perran is very fond of a

little yachting—take him with you; do as you please. As I can't be here, I shall really be very much obliged by your using the yacht."

"I thought you were going to the Scilly Isles?"

Alfred, having on the spur of the moment invented this visit to London, and arranged the offer of the *Fairy* at the moment that he had uttered it, was not to be daunted by thus being reminded of a former plan.

"They are better visited later in the year," he said, with admirable self-possession. "I wish we could make a party, and all go together."

"Thank you—thank you for so many kindnesses," said Marian, giving him her hand. "You know what a friend in need is. You have really been that to me."

"Let me always be so happy. I am glad the *Fairy* has been found to do justice to her name. Fairies should always come convenient to the occasion."

He let go her hand, and yet they stood by the great bow-window as if they were both irresolute, and did not know how to part.

"This visit must have been pleasant to you. I wish you could yourself have taken me over to the Groves. It seems like asking a great deal, perhaps; but I remember and know so much. I was so glad to hear everything from Lady Glaucott."

"A friend to be trusted," said Marian.

"Knowing your family story makes one feel once more what is felt through life so often—the richness of our desires, and the poverty of our deeds."

"The injunction to bear one another's burdens does not mean that there should be no burdens to bear," said Marian, smiling on him in a way that seemed to reveal something of the patient strength with which, notwithstanding occasional flashings of human indignation, she had borne the burdens of her loved ones. "I assure you that mine are

lighter now than they have been for a very long time; and if you succeed in your good work, and get Herbert a chaplaincy abroad, I shall, I think, have no burdens to bear."

"That will be the time to begin your own life," he said.

"My own! I never had any life of my own, I think. What an odd thing it would be!"

He laughed, and began to say good-bye all over again.

"In a fortnight?" she said, as if she liked to linger on the idea.

"In about that time. If I leave Harcourt in command, I ought to write to him."

"Do, pray; I am his secretary."

"Then I certainly shall."

He went away, leaving a smile on her face. He went to Mrs. Trethewry, and bade her and her husband good-bye.

"We wish'ee well with all our hearts, Alfred Bellingsby. A fair wind and a safe return. Good luck to you, my dear!"

And so Mr. Trethewry speeded the parting guest, and returned to Amy to praise him. Amy agreed with her husband in his opinion, and she expressed the same with much force and persistence when she took up "a few broth" to Marian for her frugal luncheon.

"And here's Captain Grandison on the go also," says Mrs. Trethewry. "He has to go back to Exeter to-morrow night. But they give him a deal of liberty. He manages it somehow, and he's a great comfort here. The old Spadrons were gone when I was a child; and there's Sir Thomas over the sea, and your people gone—so the Captain is always welcome. It is so pleasant to have a man about the place."

Marian agrees with her, and she gossips on.

"I'd take the doctor when I went in the yacht, if I were you. The sea air might be too strong for Mr. Herbert upon a time, and then you would feel so circumvented to

be all alone. You know Mrs. Craven—she who went up to bring you down in the first place—a decent woman. I have known her from a child—married by the name of Trelose; she would go with you any day, and she would know what to do, if he were to be took any way sudden; and he'd enjoy himself all the more for knowing that he was well provided. There's no place in the world to be compared with this for pure air. I've heard that from strangers, and Trethewry was quite struck once, when he saw it in print. And Portray, round the point, is quite another place altogether, and good for a change, but nothing to compare with this for good and all. Now, keep your mind steady to stay here through all the Summer months—through fish-time, and harvest, and cider-making. It would do your hearts good—it would indeed!"

"You are right, dear Amy—perhaps we shall. He has been stronger the last two days."

The next day, when the *Fairy* came in, there was a wheel-chair sent to the hotel from Mr. Bellingsby for Herbert, and a note to say the *Fairy* would take it back when he had done with it.

Charley Grandison said,

"Now that is exactly what I have been wishing for the last three days, only I had no notion how to get one. How these moneyed men get the advantage over us! However, there is one thing I can do better than he can—I'll wheel you myself up to the lawn at the Groves. They are all away, and we will be once more there by ourselves. Come, Marian. Look at Herbert; he is only waiting for you to consent. Where are the waterproofs, carriage-rugs, umbrellas, and comforters? This is a good way to spend my last hours with you. I am to go to-night to Rosdew, and make my start from there."

A few hours after, those three were really on the lawn at the Groves. An old servant,

knowing who they were, then came out with chairs and a table. Charley knew that everybody would be miserable if they had not got some tea. They refused to go into the house, but there they wandered about till, fearing to exhaust Herbert, they turned to go home.

Marian watched an unwonted eagerness in Herbert's eyes as he looked from side to side, taking in every well-remembered trifle, and observing every change that years had made.

"Let us go back. It is bad for Herbert to loiter," she said, appealingly to Charley.

He helped Herbert into the wheel-chair, and said,

"Walk on first, Marian, and open the gate."

Little things work together sometimes to bring people very close together. The old familiarities were springing up between these two, who loved each other, but now in different and unequal ways.

When they came to the first house at the top of the hill, Herbert said he would walk down. "I shall like it, and it will suit me best," he said.

So Charley helped him out, only saying, "You can't walk down this stony road without help. Take my arm. Now, Marian, you can draw the empty chair."

She obeyed without a word, and followed, as they walked slowly on. People came out of their cottages to speak to them. Charley knew everybody—that was a matter of course.

"Now, Dick—you have not seen Miss Harcourt for five years, and there is some difference between twelve and seventeen. She won't know you unless you speak first."

A bronzed-faced youth came forward, pushing his black, glossy curls off his forehead, and took the management of the chair off Marian's hand. "You must let me do that, if you please. But I knew you, miss, the

first day I saw you, only I felt too shy to speak."

"What, you, Caryll! the first boy in my class. Can you write as well now as you did then?" Dick Caryll and Marian walk on together in friendly talk, and with many inquiries for old acquaintances.

They all reach the hotel, and Herbert gets to his room, being, Amy pronounces, no more tired than he ought to be.

The day is still fair, and the light strong enough for another walk. Charley asks Marian to come out with him, but she has letters to write and will not go.

He hangs about like one who ought to go and can't.

"Lady Glaucott dines at seven," he says.

"The old hour," answers Marian.

"She will expect me at six, I daresay."

Marian does not speak.

"I wish you would do or say something to make me comfortable before I go," said this hungry-hearted man, moving up and

down the room like a tamed beast, who yet wanted something to devour.

"Oh, Charley, you know how good you have been! Did I not find you here nursing Herbert? I can never forget it."

"Not to be forgotten is one thing; but to be thought of as that which I want to be is quite another."

"Then I am sorry. Don't make me sorry. There has been trouble enough."

"Well, I have some village gossips to say good-bye to. I will come back," said Charley.

But he did not come. It was night, and Herbert had gone to bed when he arrived. He had come down from Rosdew. He put his hand in at the sitting-room door. His face looked so fresh and bright. "Amy is there, I suppose?" he said.

"In Herbert's room? Yes, with her knitting."

"I am going in."

She heard him open the door, she heard

their voices—Amy had come out and was standing at the head of the stairs. Again Charley came out; again he came inside the room, where Marian now stood near the door, to bid him good-bye. He clasped her by the hand, "Oh, my dear! Good-bye, my darling Marian!" He was gone, past Mrs. Trethewry, down the stairs, and out of the house.

She had not had time to contradict him; she felt vexed and injured. It was a bitter ending to so sweet a day. She stood and questioned herself.

"Could I? No, no—never! But did I ever love him? Oh, yes, as well as any young girl could love, I suppose, once. I remember feeling that no day was perfect in which I had not seen him; every place was good where I had had him, and no one else, to talk to. He was enough for happiness. But all that was felt by one who no longer exists. I got transplanted, and transplanting changes things. I am somebody

else, and this somebody else whom I have become likes the frank face, the blythe voice, the boyish ways, and the sweet echoes of the past, but not Charley Grandison for a husband."

A few days after this Lady Glaucott, having recovered from her cold, came down to see Marian. Herbert and Dr. Perran were out in the yacht. Lady Glaucott said she was glad to be alone with Marian for a time.

"Let us talk of Charley. He is a very fine officer—everybody says so—with that quickness of action which does not always in everybody follow thought."

"If it is a soldier-like virtue, Charley possesses it in perfection, I should think."

"He tells me that he is very much attached to you, Marian."

She answered calmly,

"I know him, and, what is of more importance, I know myself. We could not be happy together."

"How is that? It would be a good thing for you to marry."

"How can I make anyone understand? You would have me marry a man who at a moment's notice would make a most impetuous lover, when I only like him as Charley Grandison."

"You could not like him as anyone else? I don't understand you. He is a man of high character, and he has been faithful—faithful in his own way, in the way that is natural to him, I mean. He has told me all."

"I think I shall cry about it," said Marian, "only I never do cry. But we are such different people, and I——"

But then Marian remembered those words which had troubled her—"easy circumstances"—and she could not explain how the life she had led, of daily care and mortification and strife for others, had beaten the material of her character into harder

stuff than could be brought to mate with easy-going Charley Grandison.

She might also have felt—only it had never occurred to her to feel it—that the hardest substances take the finest polish, and that she was a great living instance of that truth—feeling, forecasting, working for others, without exhibiting any apparent trace of that great and incessant labour of love beyond the soft, steady, comprehending glance of those sweet brown eyes, the stillness of the marble forehead, and the slow smile of most emotionless lips. She could not tell why Charley was now as unfit for her as she was for him; she made a poor attempt at an explanation, but Lady Glaucott only interrupted her in the gentlest way to say that she was exactly what Charley wanted—she would act as ballast to him in a course which quick feelings made somewhat erratic.

"The discipline of the army has been of immense advantage to him," she said; "dis-

cipline is so good for him. You would just bring him to perfection, Marian, if you would only consent."

"Dreadful!" exclaimed Marian, closing her eyes. "I don't care about being married, but, if I were to think of it, it would be to me as a perfection of rest, above all idea of discipline, where I could be still and worship; and less than that I could get anywhere—as nurse in an infirmary, or matron of a hospital of imbeciles; or I could open a school for boys of headstrong tempers, impatient of home-rule and of neglected education. I could give up that kind of thing whenever I liked to do so, and while I kept it I should be well paid."

"Oh, Marian! Is there no memory of the old days that pleads for Charley?"

"Yes. Everything of that sort pleads to me very strongly. I felt it very much, as we were all at the Groves together, enjoying the sweetnesses and sadnesses of the dear place, which *will* look as if it were still

one's own. But some memories have more of deaths than marriages in them! That was what I thought then, and I think it now."

"I have done my task but badly," said Lady Glaucott, with a sigh. "I feel as if I did not know what to say to him."

"Say anything," said Marian. "That I hate blue eyes; that his hair is too light, and has too much curl in it. That he is two inches too tall."

"I will." Lady Glaucott was laughing.

"They are excellent things to say, because they are things which can never change."

"Ah! I had no thought of that," said her friend.

CHAPTER XV.

PAYING VISITS.

To thee I turn from riot and from noise,
Turn to partake of more congenial joys.
KIRKE WHITE.

IT is a common saying, that people have turning-points in their lives. It was certainly a turning-point in Marian's life when Teresa Mawley took Mrs. Belville's advice in the matter of her engagement to Herbert Harcourt. It had given life to Marian. It makes one think that disagreeable, selfish, heartless, fickle people have a part to play in this world, and that the pleasant, amiable, self-sacrificing people should regard them as being sent for their good. As yet, however,

it had not occurred to Marian to consider Miss Mawley in the light of her best friend.

It was perhaps a month after the *Fairy* had been sent back to Portspadron for Herbert's use, that Alfred Bellingsby found himself at the Paddington Hotel, asking for a bed, and revolving in his mind what would be the best thing for him to do the next day. He had written once to Herbert, and he had had an answer—half a page in pencil from Herbert, full of thanksgiving for the yacht, and a postscript from Marian. The postscript had been read many times. Whether or not it was worth the reading we may judge for ourselves. This was it:

"Dear Mr. Bellingsby,

"There is no air like sea-air, and Herbert lives half his days in the yacht. Dr. Perran declares that he shall lose all his practice; he can't keep out of the yacht. I never felt so much like a queen; so many men obey me—all the

crew of the yacht. I intend to make you quite tired of it, that I may have it all to ourselves. Herbert tells me to fill this page, and promises to tell me what to say, and then he falls asleep. It would be against all rules and regulations to wake him, and the post goes in half an hour. I am very sorry for you, but I am afraid I can't do any better, for there is nothing to say. I feel the base ingratitude of those last words. I mean that you have given me more to say than I am able to write. Will you believe that I am really most gratefully yours,

"MARIAN HARCOURT."

It seemed to Mr. Bellingsby the most agreeable of all the written pages that had ever been spread out before his eyes; and that he should never feel in want of literature while he had such a page to read. He read a life's history in it; it painted for him the future, when, of all the men in the

world, he should be the most blessed and the most contented!

Having breakfasted, read his letter, and made these agreeable meditations, he thought he would write to Herbert again. But feeling, as Marian had felt, that there was that to say which he could not write, he set off in search of adventures, thinking that possibly by the evening he might have something to tell.

In course of time he appeared in the presence of Lady Florence.

"It is too nice!" she exclaimed in her most musically low voice. "How good of you! Sit down. What about Mr. Harcourt and Marian?"

"Did you ever see Lady Glaucott?"

"No—yes. A hundred years ago, for half a minute. My mother knew all her people before she was married."

"Then you don't know anybody?"

"What can he mean?" asked Lady Florence in a whisper, looking out towards space

through panes of glass, and between the branches of dwarf evergreens, and mignonette in the little balcony—"What *can* he mean?"

"Not the people—not Portspadron people. Old Trethewry, and all that——"

"Oh dear no! What a dreadful name!"

"Do you think so? I like the Far West names very much."

Now Mr. Bellingsby was not sitting in apparently a comfortable attitude; and he was looking over the surface of the carpet, into distant corners, under chairs and side-tables. Lady Florence read the truth in an instant. "He has fallen in love with Marian: delightful!" Those were her thoughts. "Do you live in the yacht?" she asked.

"I pretend to live there, when I am not with my mother. But there is a white-washed house, with a slated front, in a court-yard, with a garden all round it, with myrtles, and all manner of things in the

open air—it is an Inn. And I go there. Harcourt and Miss Harcourt are living there. They give me my tea sometimes."

"How excessively kind!" And Lady Florence looked at him, as if wondering what was to come next.

"Grandison has been there; the depôt of his regiment is at Exeter. He is an old friend of theirs; like a brother, and a capital fellow. His head-quarters are at Lady Glaucott's. Lady Florence, where is Lord Plinborough?"

"Oh, he did me a commission at Alexandria. It came home yesterday. I expect him to write in a day or two."

"What made him go away in such a hurry?"

"He never told me."

"And you don't know?"

"I did not say that. There was a reason, and it was told me by another person."

"May I know?"

"Isn't Marian delightful?"

"Yes. Now, may I know?"

"It is no concern of yours."

"Where is Mrs. Harcourt?"

"Staying with her daughter, Mrs. Naylor."

"But where?"

"Old Mr. Naylor has a charming place. You go to Fulham, and over the bridge, and drive a mile, I suppose. His gardens are delicious. He is a great practical gardener, and works with his own hands. The young people live with him. It has become one of my desires to go and see them. She is a most charming creature—Lizzie, I mean."

"But not really as attractive, or as beautiful, as her sister."

"Perhaps not."

It was a principle with Lady Florence to consider those girls who were unmarried in a family as the best-looking. "I think their styles so very different. It was good for a rising man, of really extraordinary

talent—what taste he has!—to marry a woman of good position and pedigree. That is the use of pedigree and hereditary position; no misfortune can deprive you of it. Those Harcourts are such thorough gentlefolk."

Lady Florence ceased speaking, to give her guest time to choose another subject of conversation. But he had no desire to choose another immediately.

"Didn't you once tell me that Lord Reinecourt was going again to Algeria this coming Winter?"

"He says so," she answered.

"He would take Harcourt as chaplain."

"Of course!" she exclaimed. "I wonder that I never thought of it. He would like him so much; and the comfort to his wife would be immense."

"Because I can get him to Alexandria or Cairo—I can do that if he won't have him. But Algeria would suit him best. It is, however, a good while to wait."

"No. Lord Reinecourt goes in October, and he won't be back till the following April or May. Would that suit him?"

"Yes, perfectly. My aid would come in afterwards, for the following year, if he wanted more. Will you write, or shall I?"

"I shall see Lord Reinecourt in a day or two—he will be interested; he is the possessor of that old place where the Harcourts lived before they got the Groves, a hundred years ago and more."

"I thought it would do," said Mr. Bellingsby.

"Then," said Lady Florence, "Mrs. Harcourt, who is of infinite use to Mr. Naylor, tying up his plants by day, and playing cards with him at night, so as to leave the lovers to themselves—she could stay with them for the Winter; and what can we do with Marian?"

"She would spend the Winter with Lady Glaucott, at the Towers and Rosdew. I am

asked to the Towers for a week's shooting next Winter."

Lady Florence wondered in her heart if they were really engaged. A few weeks together, amidst old haunts and unsophisticated people, sitting on rocks, watching the tide, listening to the cries of the sea-gulls, helping to take care of a sick man—under such conditions plans mature speedily. These thoughts passed through her mind.

"Are you going to see Mrs. Harcourt?" she said.

"I was planning the visit for this afternoon. I wished to give her the pleasure of hearing about Harcourt—and his sister."

"Of course she would be thankful. Do go."

And so they said "Good-bye." But before he went away Lady Florence had thanked him in her pleasantest way for coming.

"I am so glad to see you, so pleased to see you also as one who had come straight

from Marian—I admire her so much—not in the way in which everybody admires a beautiful woman, but because she is what she is," Lady Florence said, with emphasis. "I love her; I have seen a great deal of her. Good-bye."

That last "good-bye" fell like a benediction on Alfred's gratified spirit, and he went off rejoicing. He knew very little of what Marian had gone through in the last few years; and absolutely nothing of Trowberry Terrace. All he knew he had heard from Lady Glaucott and Mr. and Mrs. Trethewry, with occasional scraps of information from Dr. Perran.

Now he was thinking how he could reward Marian for the love he had set about winning from her, in his quiet, never-ceasing way. And with these recollections, and in this frame of mind, he found himself at Mr. Naylor's door. It looked like a very small house, and an unusually large conservatory. Three beautiful silky-furred dogs received

him from their basking-place on the steps in a gentlemanly manner, with much of tail-waggings, and other tokens of appreciation of the fact that he was as well-bred as themselves. A perfectly well-mannered woman-servant opened the door, and a bell was rung which summoned a groom from the stables to take his horse.

He was then ushered into an enchanting room, where two ladies sat, one at work and the other sketching a little girl, who was sitting on a stool in the middle of the table—the table being in a proper position for the requisite light and shade.

The lady who worked was Mrs. Harcourt, who rose up with care and propriety, and the lady who was sketching was Lizzie, who moved her easel back and said,

"How do you do? This is my mother, Mrs. Harcourt—you remember her? And this is my little niece and model, who must be lifted down."

At these words the child held her arms

out towards Alfred, and on his walking up to her put them round his neck, on which he deposited the little creature on the carpet, while they smiled at each other and shook hands all round.

"But I feel seriously guilty of having interrupted you," he said.

"That is nothing. We have busy idleness here all day long, and my darling is a practised patient sitter. Mr. Naylor says I shall paint one day if I try."

"She had a taste for it as quite a child," said Mrs Harcourt. Then, like one recollecting herself, she said, "I hope you have come to tell me about my children."

Mrs. Harcourt's manner, as she said this, had a motherly dignity about it which, to say the least, was very effective. She was a woman in whom the absence of genius might be said to be conspicuous; as to their past trouble, and the great wreck of their worldly prosperity, she had always *had an opinion*—everybody who had been about her, and

who had known how those troubles came, had also known what that opinion was; of those who now formed her family, perhaps only Marian knew all, and why her mother called herself "a sufferer." Mrs. Harcourt now appeared in a very different character. It would have surprised Marian to see how great a change a few weeks had wrought in the uncomplaining, most prosaic dulness of Mrs. Harcourt's life of small savings and great propriety.

Seated in Lizzie's pretty sitting-room, hearing talk which she did not in the least understand, of the true and the beautiful, which filled her with respect and wonder; being treated with an old-school courtesy by Mr. Naylor, which was worshipful and highly agreeable; living where a golden oil kept the wheels of life safe, bright, and easy-going; and seeing Lizzie, the lovely centre of a world of pleasant colouring, full of employment, thankfully happy, and the object of an unbounded admiration—in the

midst of such things Mrs. Harcourt threw off the obligations of patience which she had worn for so many years, and became the agreeable woman of the world once more.

She had never had any world since leaving the Groves till now that she found herself in the midst of all earthly luxuries, in an atmosphere of good feeling, and in a temple of genius, which, if anything were necessary to excuse her daughter's marriage, excused and explained it at once. Her life at Trowberry Terrace had been no more life than that of the china vase on the top of the cabinet. She could have sunk to something lower, without any difficulty, and found a new world, adopted its ways, and been happy in its requirements; but as to Trowberry Terrace, she could not *labour* for *that*—she could only endure it, which she had done. To Marian had been given that thankless task of being spent to keep what no one desired to possess; and yet Marian had been right, for Herbert's sake.

So now, when, with her new manner—which was, in fact, her old one—she asked Alfred if he had come to talk of her children, she said it with a grace which struck him, and which he admired exceedingly.

Yes; he had come for that, he said. He should soon see them again; he wanted to make himself more welcome at Portspadron by seeing her before going back.

The visit was a perfectly successful effort. Frederick Naylor came in and his father; the old man talked learnedly over the indigenous plants of the West, and asked questions which Alfred could not answer; but he listened with the modest propriety of a scholar before his master.

"I am ashamed of my ignorance," he said.

"Sir, I apologise for my learning; but I was brought up to work diligently at a hard-headed profession, and I could not live without a pursuit."

Mr. Bellingsby promised to make indus-

trious attempts to obtain all the information Mr. Naylor desired.

"I shall call and undergo your examination when I am better up in the subject," he said. Then he left them, glad to have had a glimpse of so bright a life.

He pronounced Lizzie to be immeasurably improved—more lovely, and with more in her. He thought how he should have pleasant things to say to Marian, for he admired Mrs. Harcourt, and her way of speaking of Herbert delighted him—it was so full of motherly pride, and there was a melancholy tenderness coupled with it which was very touching. But yet she had expressed herself as full of hope, and she thanked him for all that he had done for her children in a way which made him feel that it would be very good to be her son.

He was more than ever in love with Marian when, gazing on the cultivated evergreens, and taking in at a glance a glorious

bank quite covered with flowers, in perfect bloom and exquisite contrast of colour, he walked his horse down the drive cut through the velvet turf, and felt that a spot of earth more full of beauty and culture he should probably never find, however far he might seek it. And there was another thought—they had known Patty. He had said, as he looked at Lizzie's drawings,

"You were very fond of this sort of thing, I remember, at a very early age."

She had looked up at him steadily.

"You remember!"

"I never forget," he had said; and she had answered, "Nor do I."

"Come and see us again," Frederick Naylor said. "Lizzie likes old friends."

He had promised to come again easily enough. Then Mrs. Harcourt had asked after his mother. "We were friends, and I always admired Angersteins."

"I remember the smoke above the elm-trees," said Lizzie.

"She is very well, but she has been away. She comes back this week."

"She will be pleased to see Marian," said Mrs. Harcourt.

CHAPTER XVI.

EASE AND ELEGANCE.

Nay, smile not at my sullen brow—
Alas! I cannot smile again;
Yet heaven avert that ever thou
Shouldst weep, and haply weep in vain.

BYRON.

WE have seen Mrs. Belville before to-day; the only great variety that has of late occurred in her life is that Teresa Mawley lives with her. The sisters were really fond of each other, but there was a rankling grief on each side, and their intercourse spoke of its existence only too plainly sometimes.

"Everybody is engaged to go somewhere. I wonder whether Lord Mawley ever in-

tends to ask us there? Not that I should enjoy seeing Marmaduke and his wife at the Grange. That inconsiderate mother of his stopped her carriage to speak to me the other day, and when she told me of it, she had actually had the unkindness to say that they enjoyed the arrangement very much, and that Lady Mary Mawley had her mother staying with her. 'They are so happy,' she said, in her affected way, just as she drove off."

"When did you see her? You never told me," said Teresa.

"It must have been three days ago. It was the day you lunched with Lady Branksome. I remember it very well, because I was driving home after taking you there, and she asked after you."

The two sisters were sitting together after dinner, in Mrs. Belville's beautifully-furnished boudoir, Mr. Belville having that evening an engagement from home.

"Did she speak of me?" asked Teresa.

"I used to be very fond of her. What did she say?"

"Oh! she asked——"

"No; give me the exact words," said Teresa, in a petulant tone, leaning back in her low-seated, high-backed chair, and hiding her face with a screen.

"She said—as you so desire the exact words—she said, 'How is poor Teresa?'"

A smothered sob, after a moment's silence, came from behind the screen, and Mrs. Belville said, almost angrily,

"How can you be so silly?"

"I believe that everyone pities me," sobbed Teresa, with a little, half-suppressed, gasping sigh. "Anything would have been better than what I have had to endure lately."

"No one, you know, could have foreseen that Lord Plinborough would have behaved so abominably. Up to that moment everything went straight enough. I never felt more gratified in all my life than when he

proposed. You can't deny that you were happy, Teresa."

"I don't wish to deny it. It was just what ought to have happened first."

"No, no; you would have lost all the ridiculous pleasure of a romantic passion," said Mrs. Belville, cruelly. "No doubt a most exquisite enjoyment, though I never knew anything of the kind myself. He was very fond of me, though. And we pull together very well," she added, apologetically.

"And I should have been happy with Lord Plinborough. But to be so used—for Herbert to have *stabbed* me! I sometimes think that I will write him a letter—*such* a letter it would be! How could a man behave so shamefully to a woman? If it killed him, I should like to tell him what I feel."

"How much do people know, I wonder?" said Mrs. Belville. "Lord Plinborough must have spoken as freely as he did. It was known in the City, Belville said; and

he was so vexed to have to confess that it was all over. Of course, *there*, it was attributed to some hitch about money; and whether or not we were the heiresses that we were at first reported to be was debated for days. Belville, however, as you know, soon convinced the world of that, and then there was no more to say."

"I have heard all about it half-a-dozen times," said Teresa, gloomily.

Mrs. Belville looked over the edge of her fan, as if she would ask, "What is the matter now?"

"It is a very dreadful contrast for me to look back upon," said Teresa. "The Grange, and everything so delightful; such a prospect of happiness. Everybody full of admiration. Lady Mawley so sympathising and obliging. And now we are never thought of. They have put their friend into the poor dear Parsonage, and taken even our house to live in—I did not care for anything till that note came from Lord Plin-

borough—such a cruel thing! And I believe that if I could have rallied, and answered him when I saw him at Lady Branksome's, I should have been married to him now; but I was so overcome by that message from Mr. Harcourt, when he was too weak to write, and Lord Plinborough, believing him to be dying, wrote it for him—I was so overcome by that cruel note that I quite broke down, and he put on such a hard, magnificent manner,—I keep on thinking of it, I can't get it out of my head,—and almost before I could speak he had given me up, and was offering to help me to make it up again with Herbert, that he might be happy in his death! Ridiculous! I never had a chance to do myself justice. It was really too bad. He can't be dead! You have not heard anything about that, have you?"

"He is not dead; neither do I believe he is dying. The sister I saw—she is very good-looking, and quite young—is

with him; and his mother is staying with Mrs. Naylor. Belville hears it all from Mr. Barnard, who married Miss Naylor. They say that old Naylor is enormously rich. He made quite a great fortune by his talents; and, by a chance stroke, he invested a great deal of money in some Australian thing, which went up enormously when the first great cry about gold began. Mr. Naylor wrote, saying that he hated fluctuations, and that he would withdraw his money; so while he was budding roses and selecting geranium-seed, they sold out for him at something like three hundred per cent. He bought that place then, gave Mrs. Barnard ten thousand pounds, and indulged his son, who is a good deal younger than his sister, in every educational whim that could enter a youth's head."

"Did you ever see Mrs. Harcourt?" Teresa asked.

"No; the daughter, and the wretched parlour, with all its horrors, were enough for

me." And Mrs. Belville shivered over the recollection of it.

"And yet," said Teresa, "everybody is praising them now. Lady Florence, whom I can't help liking—she has really been very kind—she says they have a better pedigree than we have—or Lady Branksome said it."

"Oh, stuff!" interrupted Mrs. Belville. "Those old titles always try to run down the new ones. That is said just because our uncle is the first peer; don't you be taken in with that."

"But it is annoying to have them actually set up as above one."

And then Teresa indulged in a few minutes of tearful agitation; the smallest circle of fine cambric, and the widest border imaginable of Mechlin lace, doing duty as a pocket-handkerchief. Even her sister, who had the virtues of an active wife and a careful mother, felt that she was a poor little pitiable scrap of humanity, who had not even

the smallest pretence to prettiness when her nose was red, and eyelids quivering, as was the case at that interesting moment.

"We shall have Belville home in half-an-hour," said Amelia, wishing to say something, and not clearly knowing what was the best thing to say. "He is so kind and good-natured, Teresa; don't vex him by looking as if you had cried all the afternoon."

She spoke in an entreating way, meant to be soothing; and her sister took it kindly.

Teresa got up, walked across the room, fetched some sort of woman's work, and sat down again.

"I have thrown my life away, that is the truth, Amelia. I deceived Lord Plinborough—of course, I know that I did. How could I ever guess that those two would meet; or how could I know that he would be loving, or pretending to love, me on his death-bed? I don't believe he was sincere —I won't believe it! We lived a cat-and-

dog life for some time before we parted. It was too great a mortification. I can't, even now, bear to think of him in that shocking lodging, supporting himself on two guineas a week, serving a church somewhere which nobody knew of. It was discreditable. I used to feel quite ashamed to answer when anyone, who knew of our engagement, asked where Mr. Harcourt was. Then I could not know his family because you had called and quarrelled with them. Everything had been cast into obscurity by our poor father's death."

She went on dropping her words out, like thinking out loud.

"It was impossible to marry into such a state of things; to endow them with my three thousand a year, and find myself I don't know where, with people never heard of. I could not do it. But then I certainly should have told the whole to Lord Plinborough. It was one of those wretched stories of a great mistake, which ought to

have been *all* told. There would have been nothing then for him to hear; *then* he would not have devoted himself to Mr. Harcourt—indeed, he would have avoided him. I have been so insulted, so scorned. Then the conduct of Lord and Lady Mawley has been intolerable—actual desertion!—I can't call it anything else, so occupied with their own affairs. I have no patience with such selfishness! I think that I have not one friend left except Lady Florence. Do drive me there to-morrow." And then once more Teresa hid her small face in her handkerchief, and shed tears. After which she rose to leave the room. "I have quite exhausted myself," she said; "I'll go away now. Good night."

So when Mr. Belville came back, he found his wife alone. Mr. Belville was a man who was always welcome in his own house. That is saying a great deal both for himself and his wife. He was a good-tempered man, and an excellent purveyor of

news. He was as great and as innocent a gossip as ever lived. Men and women, and their affairs, were his study and his delight; his ears were always open; his eyes never shut; his mouth ever ready to make the wisest observations and the keenest comments. Then, when he came home, he opened his budget for his wife's delectation, and Amelia had very often said to her friends, with great truth, and a pardonable pride, that, though they were often alone, they were never dull.

There was another and a different charm about Mr. Belville, which Amelia appreciated highly—he had never ceased to admire her. If she put a new bow in her hair, her husband saw it, gave her an honest kiss, and said, "Looking very well to-night, pet." In fact, she had been a grateful wife before the death of those two brothers had made her and Teresa the heiresses of their father's wealth; but since then she had been often tormented by an ambition which she could

not satisfy, and by a rankling feeling that she had degraded herself. Standing in her *crêpe*, when the last of those youths had departed, she had said, "I could have married anybody if I had only waited till now." For it was Amelia Belville's nature to worship worldliness in some shape or other. As a girl she had worshipped money, and she had obtained it. Having got it, the prospect opened, and she saw that there was more to have—she worshipped rank. But mean and irritable as this disposition often made her, to their credit be it said, Amelia was never in these evil humours in her husband's presence. He was among the contented men of this earth—he brought peace and plenty to his wife's ease and elegance; dull care fled before Mr. Belville's footsteps; and good people pulled their chairs together for a gossip.

"Well, this is pleasant," were his first words of greeting that night—"it is the coolest place—the only cool place I have

been in to-day. How do you manage these things, Pet?—and where's Teasy?"

Mr. Belville had lately adopted this contraction of Teresa's name, with a wicked conviction that it was, under present circumstances, peculiarly suited to her.

"She is gone to her room—rather blue this evening. She feels the heat, and she is bored, and not strong. Now sit down. Well, what's the news?"

"I wish she was well married."

"Ah! That was nearly done once. Those chances don't happen every day. But you are not tired of her being here, are you?" asked Amelia, anxiously.

"No, no—'specially if she goes to bed early. But she is getting wrinkled."

"Oh! no."

"And her voice is all wrong. Can't we make her happy?"

"She is happy here. She can't go anywhere else. To-night she has worried herself over her deserted state, as she calls it.

I *do* wish, for her sake, that the Mawleys were more civil. I can't think how it is. It might, perhaps, have been different. if Lady Mawley had had any girls—that would have kept us more united. Our poor father's death was just a signal for them to walk in and take possession, and then forget his children."

"We can do without them, if that is really the case. I always have done without those who can do without me. I am a busy man, and am blessed with all I want at home. But I have had a note from Lady Mawley. It was on my office table."

"You!"

"Yes. You asked for news, and you got it."

"What did she write about?"

"It was a short, simply-expressed, lady-like note; an old aunt will give her, for her own private use, ten thousand pounds; she had to name two trustees—would I be one? She said that she had lately seen you, and

that she should have been glad to have had Teresa to see her, but that Mr. Harcourt had been her son's dearest friend; that they were under obligations to him, and could I give her his direction? The Duchess and and her son's wife had taken so strongly against Teresa, that at present they could not have her at Mawley. These things, she says, are, however, never very long thought of in the world. Marmaduke will have Mr. Harcourt to stay at the Grange as soon as possible. It is just one of those little family discords that might be made serious by opposition. I am to say to you that she watches for it all to blow over."

"And not one word about Lord Plinborough!" said Mrs. Belville.

"Ah, she is too prudent to know anything about that."

"I feel quite obliged to her; a woman may behave ill and discard a man, but to be discarded by a man! If one was a

saint, one could not stand *that*," said Mrs. Belville. "There is nothing for it but silence and the most hardened coolness. And shall you be her trustee?" She admired Lady Mawley.

"Yes; and I said that I was glad to think your sister had found an agreeable home in our house. But I wish we could get her married."

"It will come. She would marry anybody, I believe."

"Poor child!" said Mr. Belville sorrowfully; "and, my dear, just to get it off my mind, if your pretty head or hand had anything to do with breaking off the match with Harcourt, it was a pity."

"Nonsense; it was horrid, and you are exactly the very man who can't be made to understand anything about it. I am glad, however, to think that the Mawleys are not as disagreeable as I feared."

"It is only natural that your cousin Marmaduke should be on his friend's side. I

don't diske him for it. But let us get little Teasy married."

But hope appeared to have departed out of Teresa's world. Her visit the next day to Lady Florence Reinecourt gave her no consolation.

"Dear girl," said that lady, "useless regrets are too melancholy. You never *loved* Lord Plinborough as you loved Mr. Harcourt. And if you had had time and opportunity to tell him everything, I am afraid that matters would not have been mended. You could only have explained to him that you were fickle, and that Mr. Harcourt had found you untrustworthy. Lord Plinborough knew so much about the Harcourts. That time when I went to Paris,"—both of those women had tears in their eyes; Teresa wiped hers with a sob, and Lady Florence went on —"when I took Lizzie, Lord Plinborough was so taken with her, that he would have proposed to her had she been free. The Harcourts are true, and of a good race;

Lizzie would not have been tempted by any man from Frederick Naylor. She woke up in Lord Plinborough the thought of a second marriage, the thought by which you profited. He bade me say this to you on a fitting occasion. Your confession would scarcely have benefited you."

"How they persecute me!" cried Teresa. And when she got home she wrote to Herbert.

CHAPTER XVII.

SUMMER.

Ye cliffs in hoary grandeur pil'd
High o'er the glimmering vale,
Ye woods along whose windings wild
Murmurs the solemn gale.

BEATTIE.

THE letter Teresa wrote reached Herbert at Rosdew.

Lady Glaucott, on some very hot weather setting in, had had them there for space, comfort and shade. In the evenings a carriage took Herbert, and sometimes Lady Glaucott and Marian, to the village, and the yacht was the delightful necessity of nearly every day.

Many letters came. Alfred wrote telling of his afternoon at Mr. Naylor's; Mrs. Har-

court wrote praising their guest, and at last a letter came from Teresa. It was a great, almost a terrible moment when Herbert, putting the envelope, addressed in the well-known handwriting, into Marian's hand, said,

"You have been so much to me; you know all so well. Take it and read it to me. I won't trust myself with it alone."

They were sitting out on the closely shaved lawn, under the branches of a cedar—with the sweet scent of the foliage on the air, and enjoying its warm fragrant shade.

"Shall I read it, whatever it is?" asked Marian.

"Oh yes, she cannot hurt me now."

So Marian read this:

"I cannot live any longer without saying to you that the indignity you did me in telling our wretched story to Lord Plinborough, whose love it was an honour to have won, has made me miserable. You have had your mean revenge. I refused to take the ring. It had never been mine, and I don't

know what has become of it. If anything could ever have been wanting to make me feel what a mistake I made in accepting you, and how right I was when I took back my word, you have supplied me with overwhelming proof. If you are ill, or if you are dying, which I believe was the excuse made to Lord Plinborough for your most unnecessary confidence, I can give you no better wish than that, before it is too late, you may repent of your conduct to me."

This was signed with her name.

When Marian came to the last word she said, after a pause, "I have read it all, Herbert."

After another pause he said, "She does not believe me guilty of any act that could injure her—done consciously? She knows me better. She does not believe it. But how her pride must have suffered before she could have written that! Poor Teresa! She would have been very happy with him. His life would have suited her better than

any life I could have given her. But what became of her love—her love for me? What could have become of her love?"

"I think I know nothing about that sort of thing," said Marian.

But all the time Marian had a letter in her work-basket directed to Herbert, and partly written to herself, which had nothing in it that all the world might not have read, but which took her fancy amazingly, and the writer was Alfred Bellingsby.

Everything she knew of him she liked; and in her heart vague thoughts, which, vague as they were, brought smiles to her lips—stirred her. Could it be possible? That thing which she never called by any name—that thing which, when it comes to womanhood, comes to that which is strong to feel, wise to judge, and firm to decide—that nameless thing was growing into strength, and making her heart tremble within her when she saw his writing, and remembered his words and voice.

Mrs. Angerstein had been away when first Marian got to Portspadron, and she had remained away through April. But in May she came back, and Marian saw her. It was a tearful meeting. Tears for those who lay dead at Hecklas, almost side by side—the young woman in her strength, and the worn-out man of seventy-seven—had been shed in each other's arms; and they had visited those graves together, telling no one of where they had been, speaking only to each other of their thoughts. Then Mrs. Angerstein had talked of her son—of Mr. Bellingsby—and she had praised him, as mothers may praise those who have never ceased to bless them. It was not without interest that Marian listened.

So time went on. During the long, warm days, with Herbert so far recovered, with the promise made of his going to Algeria as Lord Reinecourt's chaplain—once more in sight of the earth and sea, that had been

like her own from the beginning of life—Marian was very happy.

The weeks and months wore away. Lady Glaucott went to London to see some old friend, who could not come so far to see her; she made Marian mistress of the house in her absence, and Marian said she felt like a child playing at being a queen, it was so pleasant.

In August, Alfred Bellingsby persuaded Herbert to take a fortnight's cruise with him. Dr. Perran went with them. Marian wrote letters to her mother and sister, and Lady Florence, telling of all manner of things, playfully praising her life above theirs, and making merry over her own gladness.

When September came, Lady Glaucott wished Mrs. Harcourt to visit her. Herbert was recovered sufficiently to go to Lord Reinecourt, and his mother would wish to see him before he went.

"Come, dear mother," Marian wrote—

for her mother still expected her to manage things, and take the responsibility of her movements—"come at once, and don't think of the expense. We have been saving so much money lately. I shall have twenty-five pounds for Herbert to take as pocket-money when he goes to Lord Reinecourt, and he is to be paid at the rate of two hundred a year. It will be a long journey for you to take alone, but Lady Glaucott has been very kind in her arrangements. You must sleep at Exeter, where Charley Grandison will meet you and take care of you, and go with you to Plymouth, whence he will see you off the next day. You must come, mother; it is right and natural to come. It is cheaper than sending Herbert to you. He has got well in the last month. Teresa, a short time ago, wrote him a letter, and he made up his mind not to answer it. It did not require an answer; and yet, as I am a woman, I know that she would have liked to have had one. It is not al-

ways that a woman likes to have the last word. He won't talk about her now, and now I can understand the past. Herbert felt the deaths of his old friend, the Rector, and of Mr. Mawley, at the same time, dreadfully. He felt the sudden loss of independence; he had always expected to have that living, and from one of Marmaduke's letters it appears that the promise to the old friend who holds it now was not so positive as to make their giving it to Herbert impossible. He was told of the promise, and immediately they began to negociate an arrangement about it; then, when Mr. Mawley's death gave three thousand a year to his promised wife, they dropped the arrangement, and let their promise stand. They are angry with Teresa, because her conduct left Herbert penniless just when they had given up the power of helping him.

"I tell you all this, that you may know how matters stand before you come.

"Lady Mawley wrote a very kind note

to Herbert to ask him to visit them, and the politest little epistle to persuade me to accompany him. But he is so well, and Lord Reinecourt so glad to have him, and time has flown away so fast, that we could not accept their civility. So now come, dear mother, and when you want to return, I will take you back myself."

All this appeared to be perfectly satisfactory to Mrs. Harcourt, who was driven to Trowberry Terrace the next day, in order to arrange her domestic affairs before her departure.

Mrs. Grigshaw had undertaken to take care of her possessions on her going to Mrs. Naylor's; and the precious maid-of-all-work had been transferred to Mr. Naylor's household. So, beyond a conference with Mrs. Grigshaw, and a half-hour's conversation, there was very little to do.

Nevertheless, having arrived, to suit Lizzie's convenience, half an hour before the hour appointed in her note to her landlady,

Mrs. Harcourt walked softly upstairs to the drawing-room, opened the door slowly, as one would do who was entering a place of buried memories, and with trembling steps walked to the table in the middle of the room. It was there with nothing on it. But her cry—"She has slain my son!" seemed to live in the silence; and on the empty table she felt as if those trinkets still lay, like the ghost of a goodly past.

"She was not worthy of them. They had adorned true-hearted women. They could not stay with such as she is—a trifler, one in whose hands a woman's power ceases to be a sacred thing."

Then Mrs. Harcourt, knowing she was alone, knelt down, and thanked the Giver of all Good for her son's recovery.

"Make me worthy of my children," she said, "and give me a grateful heart."

She wandered through their rooms, looking very slim and lady-like, in that dress which had once been her best, and her only

good black silk. She got her keys, and arranged her property, putting away her dearest treasures, and packing up books and papers. Then, when she had locked them up, she went downstairs to meet Mrs. Grigshaw, as she entered the house.

A quarter of an hour with that good friend was enough. Lizzie arrived. Mrs. Grigshaw was upbraided with never having fixed her day for visiting her.

"I will do it myself now," said Lizzie. "Come the day my mother leaves me. The carriage that takes her away can come here and fetch you."

When they got back they found a letter from Charley Grandison. His promises were most cordially given, and his pleasure at the prospect of seeing Mrs. Harcourt again heartily expressed.

"It is very gratifying, of course," said that lady; "but I have always wondered why he never came to us when he was in England before. It was a mystery. I heard

of it from Herbert, who desired me not to mention it, and *I never did.* I suppose he will tell me about it himself now. I can remember his father marrying Mrs. Grandison, and bringing her and her son to Portspadron. He was a perfect cherub of a boy, like an infant Samuel, with his hair a little too light, though Herbert made the best in a heavenly tableau one Christmas; but I have never recalled those things, never till now, Lizzie. How is it that I do so? Is my life going to change?"

And Mrs. Harcourt's lips trembled, and her voice shook. She looked at Lizzie, as the carriage was driven swiftly along, having got near home now, and her face was pale, like that of one in fear.

"I have been so different, dear Lizzie, to-day, from my usual state; I hope I am not going to be ill."

It was a dismally prosaic ending, and Lizzie, whose natural youthful gladness of heart had not been lessened by her early

marriage, found it easiest to be prosaic too.

"We are so hungry," she said. "You would come away so early, and you left your breakfast almost untouched; I observed you."

So she got her mother back to food and wine; and then, when Frederick came home, she took him into consultation as to what had happened to her mother.

"I never saw her look so strange; and she has always been so silent, and now she began talking about old things of which she has never before, by any chance, ever said one word. I scarcely knew her, Frederick. I stopped her. It was uncomfortable to see her so different."

The consultation between husband and wife ended in Mrs. Naylor going to the faithful Rachel, at present her housemaid, and saying that she was to get ready to go with her mother to Exeter.

"You will sleep there, and come back the next day. I do not intend my

mother to take so long a journey alone."

Rachel, who had budded and blossomed like a plant under culture in Mrs. Naylor's establishment, undertook her new duties with the utmost willingness. Mrs. Harcourt, when the moment came, was glad of her companion; and she reached Exeter safely. Of course Charley Grandison was in attendance.

It "blessed Rachel's eyes," as she afterwards declared, to see him. He came to the hotel that evening, on his way to a ball, to see Mrs. Harcourt at tea, and promised to be with her in the morning. He came in, a hero in gold and scarlet, and Rachel, who remains the sole chronicler of the event, thought "she should have died when he kissed her missis, and comported himself more like an only son than ever Mr. Herbert had done, if it wasn't a sin to say so."

And so Mrs. Harcourt made her progress towards Portspadron. But Charley did more than he had promised. When Rachel

returned she brought the news that he had gone "down west" with her, he having "got his liberty," in Amy Trethewry's words, once more, and made the best use of it by visiting Lady Glaucott.

He had written to Marian, "Don't fetch your mother. We will post. I am coming with her."

And so one lovely Summer evening they arrived, Charley all gaiety and triumph, and Mrs. Harcourt quiet even to stillness.

"I am very much obliged to you," she said to Lady Glaucott; "I wish you could ever know how much, but that is impossible."

Then the two women embraced each other gravely, and Lady Glaucott was so overpowered that she did not know what to say.

"Show your mother her room, dear." Then, turning to her guest, "Your children have got so much at home here. Marian will go with you."

She thought that trouble had improved Mrs. Harcourt. Marian, looking at her mother, thought how pleasantly Lizzie's luxurious—by comparison luxurious—home had benefited her. Both felt that a change for the better had come over the slight, tall, stiff woman in black garments standing before them; and Marian was unutterably glad.

CHAPTER XVIII.

SWEET DAYS.

"Breathe, breathe, ye tender lays,
That linger down the maze
Of yonder winding grove;
Oh, let your soft control
Bend her relenting soul
To pity and to love."

MRS. HARCOURT was a study to her daughter. As if the five years that had been lived through had left on her no mark —not the smallest evidence of all that they had contained—there she stood, the gentle, well-mannered woman, with the old quiet watchfulness of life, which was neither sympathy nor disapprobation—just the same, neither older nor younger—a woman to be

admired simply because she was a gentle woman, with that ineffacable polish which belonged to her from the first. Marian said to herself that she was very proud of her mother.

There is a wonderful force in the power of standing still, doing nothing, and submitting to other people's judgments without going through the wear and tear of forming judgments for oneself. It was Mrs. Harcourt's nature to submit herself in this manner. Few things had ever roused her to declare her own opinion. In general she had avoided the responsibility of forming one. Marian had remembered this, and for five years had so met life by herself, for others, as never to have given her mother cause to trouble herself about anything.

Mrs. Harcourt had submitted herself to the occasion. The General had said she must trust Marian. She had had no cause to repent of having taken her peaceful place as a widow and a sufferer. But now that

Lizzie was married, and Mrs. Harcourt had found a welcome in her daughter's house, she had formed a strong opinion that, if Marian would marry some one, she would never go back to Trowberry Terrace, but make her home with Mr. Naylor. So Marian, having done her work, was now rather in her mother's way; and in the gentlest possible manner, and not in any way meant to vex her, Mrs. Harcourt explained all this to Marian, as they stood under the great shady, fragrant roof which the cedar made on the lawn at Rosdew.

"For instance," said Mrs. Harcourt, in a gently, argumentative way, "if you were to marry, or even if Herbert were to get a curacy, and so give you a home, it would relieve me; and I could of course make you an allowance. The threes in one hundred and eighty are sixty," Mrs. Harcourt said, with calm gravity. "I was thinking of it all the way as I came down here. Herbert would be glad to have you; and sixty

pounds a year would make you feel quite independent."

"Yes," said Marian, not very well able to still the trembling of her heart—"yes, it is a very good plan, mother. We must get Herbert a curacy, or a living, which would be best; and then let old dreams come true."

"Marriage would be best," said Mrs. Harcourt.

And then they walked out from the shelter of the great boughs, and turned towards the house. They met Lady Glaucott.

"We will drive together, if you like," she said to Mrs. Harcourt. "I want to go to Trevarna. The horses will have to rest an hour there. Will it be too long for you?"

Mrs. Harcourt said she should like to go.

"I have old friends there on whom I wish to call."

So Marian was left alone, to think on

what her mother had said to her. All she felt for the first half hour was that it was terribly true. She had done her work; she was of no more use. It would be good now to get rid of her. Marian thought to herself, "I wonder if it is worth while to be miserable. Or whether I have any right to be angry—I almost think that I have." But Marian was wise; and wisdom judgeth calmly.

She was by herself. She walked through the panelled library, and stood in the centre of the blue drawing-room. She walked to the window, and looked out over the heads of the fluttering cedars, above the masses of flowering shrubs, down the wooded gully, out to the sea basking in the sunlight, and sprinkled all over with dazzling stars, as it sparkled in the steady rays of that still and glorious Summer day. It was a peaceful hour. She could hear a voice from the fields now and then; the distant bark of a dog, the sudden cry of a sea-gull,—just

those sounds were about her as she stood there which tell of peace, and make solitude sweet.

"It is very much pleasanter than Trowberry Terrace. My mother is right. She had better make a home with Lizzie; and I had better go and seek adventures—settle my life somehow. It is simply true that when Herbert ceases to want me I shall be in the way. It is a very terrible truth that, if I cannot leave my mother free, she must, for my sake, go back to Mrs. Grigshaw. Well, I don't think I can bear that!" and Marian ended her meditations with something very like a groan.

In truth, Marian would have liked to see her mother once more in the midst of such surroundings as became her, and had once belonged to her. She would have worked hard to give them back to her, if, by any work of hers, they could have been got and secured. She had been faithful in the hard life, and made it as good as she could.

Must she not now—carrying out to the utmost her father's trust in her—relieve her mother from it? Did not that straight line of trust and duty in which she had undertaken to work faithfully lead her to give back to her mother those luxuries of life which she had been obliged for so long a time to relinquish?

Probably Mrs. Harcourt had no comprehension of the immensity of the idea which she had set before Marian's mind. But her daughter, who had the gift of seeing very accurately with the mind's eye, beheld the future revealed before her, and she was immediately occupied in getting it all by heart. She did not require one moment's self-deception; she was an ardent lover of truth, saying often that she could meet truth, whatever it was; it was only doubt and fear that she dreaded.

Just for one minute, as Marian, in her beautiful solitude, thought over the future as her mother had suggested it, her mind

turned towards Charley. He had actually asked Lady Glaucott to speak; and how it had been done she now recalled with a smile.

He was with her again now. Marian did not know it, but he was actually thinking of her at that moment, away in the wood; wondering, as he lay under a chestnut-tree, what he could do to make her love him. He was the same youthful sort of man; light in his movements, bright in his thoughts, as if no care could ever touch him; made up of hope, and the purest gaiety of heart. He was Charley Grandison, whom she could never love again, because she had loved him once.

She sat down, leaning half out of the window, letting the soft, scented Summer air play about her beautiful head, and she argued out her own case for her own benefit, as she stayed there all alone. She thought herself capable of being a good wife under two sets of circumstances—if she

fell in love with a man who was devotedly attached to her—that was a common-place picture, in which anybody might be willing to form one of so happy a pair; the other idea was that she could also be a good wife to a good man who desired to marry her, and had work for her to do which he was convinced she could do so as to please him. Love had not much to do with this second picture. Only a pure respect, a faithful interest, a perfectly-discharged trust.

"And I must be paid for it," thought Marian. "I must be in the possession of competence. Then I should be very much obliged, and undertake my duties with excellent dispositions. By the time we were both grey we should be ardent lovers, and not able to live at peace out of each other's sight."

Something deep down in her heart, some half-forgotten memory rose up and suggested Charley Grandison. Why not marry him?—you might if you liked. But she

turned from the thought; she had loved him too well. Such a love, slain, could boast of no lingering life. He was to have been her faithful hero, and he had scarcely lived up to the name of *friend*, or even *acquaintance*. No doubt she had been self-deceived. But his time was past.

Then came the thought of Alfred Bellingsby. Very gravely and gently the thought came—almost like a holy thing. She liked and admired him. She was sorry for him, and she wished for him every imaginable good. But there was nothing disturbing in this thought. It came and passed by.

"I will go to Angersteins," she said. "It always did me good to see his mother."

So Marian put on her hat and set out on her walk. And all this time Charley was arguing it out under the chestnuts. To do him equal justice, his meditations must be recorded. He thought it so hard that, when he had loved Marian all her life, he could not make her understand it. The worst of

it was that only real love on both sides could excuse a poor man marrying a penniless woman. She must be really in love with him—as fond of him as he was of her, or it could not answer. And Charley thought she took everything with such a discouraging cool-headedness.

"And I am sure she seemed to like me well enough once," he said in despair.

The love which had been the beauty and blessing of Marian's girlhood, but which she could look back upon as a mistake, and as a thing that had died for want of food, he now craved after with all his soul. "I do believe," he said in his heart—"I do believe that I could have had her once. But I was forced into prudence. I believed it to be impossible. Yet, now that I have seen her again, I am as bad as ever. I can't think what to say to her. She is impossible to get hold of. I can't say a word that ever arrests her attention; and Alfred Bellingsby can interest her by the hour."

It made him angry to think of Alfred as his rival. He was not going to bear that. It was a dog-in-the-manger state of mind, but there was a nursery rhyme that rose up and judged him:

> "If you will not when you may,
> When you will you shall have nay."

His worst difficulty was this: Marian liked him too well, and thought too highly of him, to suppose that he had loved and left her. She could not believe anything so bad of him as that which he was trying to make her believe—that he had always loved her, and yet left her to wear away her life alone.

Marian got to Angersteins. It was a pleasant walk from Rosdew, and she knew, as it seemed to her, every plant in the hedge and every stone in the road. She stopped to pick forget-me-nots by the banks of the brook—the brook that was a swift-flowing, roaring river sometimes. They were there in abundance, and so large and pure in

colour; she felt like a child, whose desires could not be satisfied with less than all. It took her some time, and then, with her sleeves improperly wet, she went on with her treasures to Angersteins.

Mrs. Angerstein was knitting stockings in a yew-tree harbour in the garden at the end of the house, into which the clematis-bowered window of the study looked. The casement stood open, and there was on everything the unchanged look of long ago. The fair-faced, soft-eyed woman rose to meet Marian, and she received her with a grave affection.

"Are you left to yourself?" she asked. "Where's your brother and the captain?"

"I am left to myself quite," said Marian. "Lady Glaucott and my mother are gone to Trevarna. Herbert is spending the morning with Dr. Perran. I do not know where Charley is, and so I am here by myself."

"And you are never more welcome than when you come alone."

"Mrs. Angerstein, you spoke once, years ago, of the good that lay in being a good to others."

"Did I, my dear?"

"Yes, and the thought took root in my heart, and for five years it bore fruit."

"I am thankful," said Mrs. Angerstein.

"But if a time comes when your work is finished, and you have no more to do in other people's lives—what then?"

"Live your own life," she said.

"But if I have no life to lead?"

"Oh! you are talking of yourself?"

"Of course."

Then Marian told Mrs. Angerstein that she had become in her mother's life a thing no longer needed—that, to do the greatest good, she ought now to go elsewhere. She told all this as she could have told it to no other person in all the world; she told it in an easy, simple, commonplace way—not as

a grief, but as a fact—a truth; not as a thing that vexed her, but as that which had come naturally as life went on, and she wanted to know what to do about it.

"I have sat here," said Mrs. Angerstein, "and watched a strange thing often in the many years I have lived here. I see the birds build their nests; they lay and hatch their eggs. When the young birds are able to leave the nest, and the time has come for them to go, if they don't go of their own will, the old birds do this for them—they push them out of the nest. What they do for their young, circumstances—to call it by no higher term—do for us. You do not desire for yourself that all your life should be spent as you have spent the last five years of it. Some day you will go out of the nest. Don't be troubled—wait; when the right thing comes, accept it, and be thankful."

That evening Alfred Bellingsby came to his mother's house. She received him, as

she always did, with pride and pleasure. When they were sitting together, just before going to bed, he said,

"Mother, if I could marry Marian Harcourt, would she suit you as well as me?"

"May God bless you, my son!"

No truer prayer was ever spoken. The whole mother's heart, in profound gratitude and unqualified approval, went with it. But she sat down trembling. Alfred was alarmed, but she told him not to fear.

"It shakes the human part of me, but my heart is glad," she said, and burst into a torrent of tears.

Alfred, who had a vague idea that it was good for women to give way in this manner sometimes, never disturbed her, but stood calmly looking at her; then, as she got up, with a face from which the momentary agitation was clearing away, and put her hand on his arm, as if she were asking pardon for having been thus agitated, he said,

"Would it really be all right, mother?"

"Yes, my son. *All* would be pleased."

He knew what she meant. She had a way of speaking of their dead as if at all great moments they were with them still.

"Have you let her know?" she asked.

"I don't believe that she suspects me. I could not go on such an errand without your blessing," he said.

"When you were all young together, we used to say that Captain Grandison would be her husband."

"And I have watched them steadily. But they are the same boy and girl, grown older, without a serious grown-up thought of home and marriage, I should say, about them. She has been here since March. He has been here often. I have watched them. They have no thought in that direction, I am sure. But for myself," said Alfred, "what I feel about it I cannot describe, neither can I tell what I think. There is a love which I shall never feel again—as to *that one* of whom I used to say, 'Her very presence

paradised the place,'—that kind of thing went with her. This is altogether different. I should be very glad and very grateful—both feelings would last my life."

CHAPTER XIX.

FRIENDS.

Since we thus were seated last,
Since our sky was first o'ercast,
Many weary years have past.
E. EVANS.

PERHAPS it was a well arranged thing that Mrs. Angerstein should have received her son's confidence before she had to welcome Mrs. Harcourt at the ceremony of a morning call.

The two women had very little feeling in common, but they rejoiced over the same facts. Each gloried in her son, and each had been extremely proud of her husband. But Mrs. Harcourt's self-contained contemplative life was a very different thing from

Mrs. Angerstein's equally noiseless but active one. Their original ranks in life had also been different, yet they had always respected and admired each other.

After the years that had parted them, they now met pleasantly, and as those who have by labour and by loss attained to an equal place in the great battle-field of human life.

Mrs. Angerstein shewed them into the study, pleasant with the afternoon sun coming through purple blinds. "You have added to your books, I think," said Mrs. Harcourt.

"Mr. Bellingsby has. He has studied much these last four years. He lives among the books when he is not at sea; and being a good speaker of foreign tongues, he has brought back many volumes of great value from the places he has visited. This room used to be my daughter's care. It has never wanted attention since her death."

Herbert, who had come with Lady Glaucott and his mother, asked if Alfred was at

home. "I have not seen him for a week," he said.

"He has been away. He went to Exeter, to persuade Mrs. Clayford to come down to me. But he did not succeed. She spent three months here last year, and so enjoyed herself, dear lady. She, and Jerry, and Joan, among the ducklings, was a sight to be seen, I assure you—treading the little things under her feet, and then begging their pardons, with her eye-glass up, to see if she had hurt them. We grew quite fond of her. And Mr. Bellingsby is a prime favourite now. The sight of her niece so happy has made her forgive my son. But you know her, ma'am, I believe?"

"Yes, I *did* know her," said Mrs. Harcourt; "but I lost sight of her on going to London. Her niece was at my daughter's wedding. I hope to know more of Mrs. Garret Naylor."

"He has been a true friend to me and mine," said Mrs. Angerstein. "I wore a

smart ribbon for him, when he was elected Member for Trevarna, which was a thing I never did before, and probably shall never do again."

"Oh! we can't do anything here without Mr. Garret Naylor's help," said Lady Glaucott. "They are going to give me a fortnight at the Towers in the Winter. Are you going to Danesford, Mrs. Angerstein?"

"Oh! no," she said, in a tired voice. "I did my duty once, and once is enough. The next time he keeps open house he must have a wife to help him."

Lady Glaucott looked surprised. She had never before heard any allusion to the idea of a wife. But she was glad, and she said so quickly.

"Quite right," added Mrs. Harcourt, looking sagacious. "There are duties to society which become debts, and they ought to be paid."

"And how well you look again, Mr. Herbert! And what are you going to do this

next Winter?" asked Mrs. Angerstein.

Then she was told of the engagement made with Lord Reinecourt, and Lady Glaucott observed that Algiers was strangely picturesque, and Mrs. Harcourt said that the whole thing was a Providence.

"It was Alfred Bellingsby," said Herbert, bluntly. "He had heard of what Lord Reinecourt wanted, and went straight to Lady Florence and got it."

"He was glad to give, however," said Mrs. Angerstein. "Lord and Lady Reinecourt said so to Alfred their own selves. It will do you good to know that you are a comfort to others."

"I hope so. But if Alfred has been educated in that doctrine, I can assure you he has done credit to your instructions."

"Ah! he'll get his reward," said Mrs. Angerstein, with a smile. "And I should like to see Lady Florence. My son speaks so well of her."

"Ah! if I were not so shy, I would ask

her to come down to us," said Lady Glaucott.

"Her mother, Lady Branksome, is gone to Brighton, and Lady Florence is in London alone. A day or two before I left my daughter, Lady Florence drove out to see her. She often visits them. She admires my son-in-law's genius. He is now engaged on some plans for Lord Reinecourt—an addition to the house, with a new garden, on which the 'lady's bower' will look out—a room quite in the old style, with all modern improvements, of course."

Mrs. Harcourt, with the memory of all the luxurious beauty of Lizzie's home strong upon her, liked to talk of it all very much. She had talked in her quiet, exhaustive fashion, to her heart's content, when she had called on old Mr. Naylor's cousins at Trevarna. And Miss Garret and Miss Naylor had heard it all with an immense satisfaction, and a pardonable pride. They gravely determined to spend the Autumn in

knitting a waistcoat and comforters for young Frederick, whom they had always heard spoken of as taking after his mother, and by no means strong. And Miss Garret said there was no employment more thoroughly catch-cold than his, always standing about among bricks, half-built walls, and ladders. Such perfectly antediluvian notions had these excellent ladies of the kind of life into which Lizzie had married. But these ladies, happy in the undisturbed knowledge of being women of good pedigree, "of the old sort," they called themselves, had no feeling of Lizzie having condescended to enter, by her marriage, on a lower state. They were glad that young Frederick had done so well; but that she had done ill never entered their heads. Was there anything in this world that could cast scorn on wealth, good conduct, and long descent? Were not their names in the Herald's books, on the old tiles in the cathedral, in the painted glass left in the east windows at Hecklas?

Had they not point-lace, brocade dresses, satin shoes, and old fans, all fit for a museum, upstairs in their great grandmother's cupboard? Had not a departed aged Lady Reinecourt come to see it all once, and taken her gloves off before holding a china basin to the light to observe its texture? Had Lord Reinecourt ever gone through Trevarna without calling? Had he not refreshed himself, on a cold frosty day, with cake and cherry-brandy, which their own hands had made? And was not their own nephew a Member of Parliament, and one of the greatest men of the day?

All these things—not said, but felt—were considered as very supporting by Miss Naylor and Miss Garret; and so supported they lived blamelessly, enjoying the respect and gratitude of many neighbours, and disturbing no man's peace.

When Mrs. Harcourt left their house, she found that all her supposed superiority had dropped away from her in the presence

of modest truth and an indisputable history.

"I am glad to have come here once more. I owe you many thanks," she said to Lady Glaucott, as they walked home together after their visit to Angersteins. "There is something so genuine about our friends here that I feel it does me good."

And yet another friend, and a new one, was to be brought into the out-of-the-way little world of Portspadron. When Lady Florence Reinecourt's name was mentioned that night at Rosdew, it was literally carried by acclamation that Lady Glaucott should invite her to stay there. All Lady Glaucott's shyness vanished under the music of loud praise which the hope of seeing Lady Florence produced; and the end of all was that she was asked, and that she came.

No one, not even Lady Florence herself, could have guessed what a joyful event her arrival was to Marian. When a friendship is formed between a woman and a man—supposing for a moment that such a thing is

possible—the woman is always reticent—she is coy, and has no desire to have her thoughts, actions, regrets, and desires all perfectly known. There is always a wish to be taken for something more than she really is; always in fear lest perfect knowledge should produce criticism, and lay the foundation for a less exalted opinion than that which she believes she enjoys. But between women the contrary experience prevails. The younger and weaker invariably desires to manifest herself to her friend exactly as she is. It is part of her worship thus to offer herself up. So Marian rejoiced over Lady Florence's arrival, because that lady might now know what she could never tell, and see for herself that strange life which no words could describe.

Certainly Lady Florence brought with her enough interest, and an undoubted talent for investigation. Within twenty-four hours she had made friends with Mr. Nicholson, Sir Thomas's steward, and she

was sitting on the green turf in front of the Groves sketching the house. She had heard the whole story of the Harcourts from a man who had possessed all the known advantages of a looker-on. She had gone all over the house; she had seen, with a pleased surprise, that the General's room remained just as he had left it, with the books in the book-cases—they had been purchased as they stood.

Mrs. Nicholson had whispered to Lady Florence that they all believed that Sir Thomas had done this, hoping to sell it all back again one day to Mr. Herbert.

"There was some talk—perhaps her ladyship might have heard it—of Mr. Herbert marrying an heiress. It would have been fine times then, if they had got it all back."

Lady Florence heard, holding her head down to hide the quick tears that came whenever the thought of Mr. Mawley's death was brought before her mind.

"He may marry yet," she said, with regained composure, examining her sketch-book with unnecessary care—"he may marry yet; and I can easily believe how true his welcome back would be." Then she wandered home slowly, wondering over the coil that the threads of human life got themselves into now and then.

But Lady Florence's chief conquest was Charley Grandison. She subjugated him entirely, and her triumph over him was complete. He followed her about with worshipping steps; he admired her beyond expression; he was at once her true knight and most dutiful slave. She had come down for a month, and within a week Charley had told her of all his hopes and wishes, and described to her all the great events of his life. He could not help doing this; simply she intended him to trust her, and he had done so. She had guessed the story that lay between him and Marian—

the old story of "Divided," in these later years so sweetly sung—

"He prays 'Come over,'—I may not follow;
I cry, 'Return,' but he cannot come;
We speak, we laugh, but with voices hollow,
Our hands are hanging, our hearts are dumb."

With her whole attention given to Charley, and with her heart full of love for Marian, she got to know all the story, and she knew that she was hoping against common sense and experience when she desired to bring them together. Though Lady Florence openly held that marriage meant *home*, and that the meaning of that word included all things necessary for a woman's happiness, she saw that, in spite of this doctrine, Marian could not make a home with Charley. "She has loved him too well," she acknowledged, with a sigh. "Such a mistake!"

With Marian by her side in the sweet Summer dusk, when the day was done, and the girl's tongue unloosed, she would listen, and understand; and having made herself mistress of all facts and feelings, she would

look anxiously into the future for a place in which Marian might find rest. Two things only seemed to be plain and certain in this not yet unfolded future—that Marian would not marry Charley Grandison, and that they could never get back to the old life at Trowberry Terrace.

"Tell me what you are going to do during the next three months, after Herbert has sailed with Lord Reinecourt?"

"We stay here till he is gone; then I take my mother back to Mrs. Grigshaw's. I got ready my Winter garments, with her help, and I go in November to the Towers to spend three months there. When Lady Glaucott gets back here, I shall return to Trowberry Terrace, to wait for Herbert's return."

"And your mother?"

"My three months' absence she will spend with Lizzie."

"And afterwards?"

"Who knows?" said Marian.

These events all happened just as Marian had declared them. Herbert, wonderfully recovered, and assured by Dr. Perran that a Winter in the sunshine would complete his cure, bade his mother, sister, and many friends good-bye, and joined Lord Reinecourt. Charley, having exhausted his fertile imagination of all further pretexts for obtaining extensions of leave, returned to his regiment; and—

"My dear Marian, where do we go on leaving this place?" asked Mrs. Harcourt.

"We shall go to Trowberry Terrace. I shall want to mend my clothes, and turn my last year's stuff gown," said Marian. "We ought to write for Rachel."

"She would not come, I am afraid, my love."

"Then I must make some arrangement on the spot by which we shall manage without her. I hope you will stay and help me, mother."

"I do not intend to do less than my duty,"

said Mrs. Harcourt, very gently. "You will know what I mean when you get there, for I have never found you wanting in intelligence."

In this way, and as all things come to an end, the Summer at Portspadron was brought to a close.

END OF THE SECOND VOLUME.

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